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Mary Robinson

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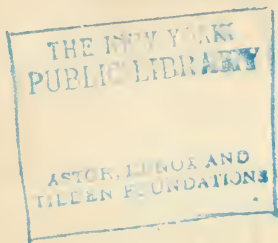
WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS
SEQUELS CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE
DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOLUME VII.

MARY ROBINSON.—CHARLOTTE CHARKE.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE, TAVISTOCK
STREET, COVENT GARDEN.



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MEMOIRS
OF
THE LATE
Henry
MRS ROBINSON,

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

FROM THE EDITION EDITED BY HER DAUGHTER.

LONDON: 1826. *n*

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE, TAVISTOCK
STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following brief Memoirs of a beautiful, engaging, and, in many respects, highly gifted woman, require little in the way of introduction. While we may trace some little negative disingenuousness in the writer, in regard to a due admission of her own failings, sufficient of uncoloured matter of fact remains, to show the exposed situation of an unprotected beauty—or, what is worse, of a female of great personal and natural attraction, exposed to the gaze of libertine rank and fashion, under the mere nominal guardianship of a neglectful and profligate husband. Autobiography of this class is sometimes dangerous; not so that of Mrs Robinson, who conceals not the thorns inherent in the paths along which vice externally scatters roses. For the rest, the arrangement of princely establishments in the way of amour, is pleasantly portrayed in these brief volumes, which in many respects are not without their moral. One at least is sufficiently obvious, and it will be found in the cold-hearted neglect which a woman of the most fascinating mental and personal attractions may encounter from those whose homage is merely sensual, and whose admiration is but a snare.



MEMOIRS

OF

MARY ROBINSON.

At the period when the antient city of Bristol was besieged by Fairfax's army, the troops being stationed on a rising ground in the vicinity of the suburbs, a great part of the venerable Minster was destroyed by the cannonading before prince Rupert surrendered to the enemy; and the beautiful gothic structure, which at this moment fills the contemplative mind with melancholy awe, was reduced to but little more than one half of the original fabric. Adjoining to the consecrated hill, whose antique tower resists the ravages of time, once stood a monastery of monks of the order of St Augustine. This building formed a part of the spacious boundaries which fell before the attacks of the enemy, and became a part of the ruin, which never was repaired, or re-raised to its former gothic splendours.

On this spot was built a private house, partly of simple, and partly of modern architecture.* The front faced a small garden, the gates of which opened to the Minster-green (now called the College-green): the west side was bounded by the cathedral, and the

* This mansion was nearly in a ruined state and uninhabitable in the year 1792.

back was supported by the antient cloisters of St Augustine's monastery. A spot more calculated to inspire the soul with mournful meditation can scarcely be found amidst the monuments of antiquity.

In this venerable mansion there was one chamber whose dismal and singular constructure left no doubt of its having been a part of the original monastery. It was supported by the mouldering arches of the cloisters ; dark, gothic, and opening on the minster sanctuary, not only by casement windows that shed a dim mid-day gloom, but by a narrow winding staircase, at the foot of which an iron spiked door led to the long gloomy path of cloistered solitude. This place remained in the situation in which I describe it in the year 1776, and probably may, in a more ruined state, continue so to this hour.

In this awe inspiring habitation, which I shall henceforth denominate the Minster-house, during a tempestuous night, on the twenty-seventh of November 1758, I first opened my eyes to this world of duplicity and sorrow. I have often heard my mother say that a more stormy hour she never remembered: The wind whistled round the dark pinnacles of the Minster tower, and the rain beat in torrents against the casements of her chamber. Through life the tempest has followed my footsteps; and I have in vain looked for a short interval of repose from the perseverance of sorrow.

In the male line I am descended from a respectable family in Ireland, the original name of which was Mac Dermott. For an Irish estate, my great grandfather changed it to that of Darby. My father, who was born in America, was a man of strong mind, high spirit, and great personal intrepidity. Many anecdotes, well authenticated, and which, being irrefragable, are recorded as just tributes to his fame and memory, shall, in the course of these memoirs, confirm this assertion.

My mother was the grand-child of Catherine Seys,

one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Richard Seys, Esq. of Boverton Castle, in Glamorganshire. The sister of my great grand-mother, named Anne, married Peter lord King, who was nephew, in the female line, to the learned and truly illustrious John Locke, a name that has acquired celebrity which admits of no augmented panegyric.

Catherine Seys was a woman of great piety and virtue; a character which she transferred to her daughter, and which has also been acknowledged as justly due to her sister lady King.* She quitted this life when my grand-mother was yet a child, leaving an only daughter, whose father also died while she was in her infancy. By this privation of paternal care my grand-mother became the élève of her mother's father, and passed the early part of her life at the family castle in Glamorganshire. From this period till the marriage of my mother I can give but a brief account. All I know is, that my grand-mother, though wedded unhappily, to the latest period of her existence was a woman of amiable and simple manners, unaffected piety, and exemplary virtue. I remember her well; and I speak not only from report, but from my own knowledge. She died in the year 1780.

My grand-mother Elizabeth, whom I may, without the vanity of consanguinity, term a truly good woman, in the early part of her life devoted much of her time to botanic study. She frequently passed many successive months with lady Tynt, of Haswell in Somersetshire, who was her god-mother, and who was the lady Bountiful of the surrounding villages. Animated by so distinguished an example, the young

* Collins's Peerage gives the following account of this lady: "Peter lord King married Anne, daughter of Richard Seys, of Boverton in Glamorganshire, Esq. with whom he lived to the day of his death in perfect love and happiness, and left by her four sons and two daughters." Vol. vii. p. 273.

Elizabeth, who was remarkably handsome,* took particular delight in visiting the old, the indigent, and the infirm, resident within many miles of Haswell, and in preparing such medicines as were useful to the maladies of the peasantry. She was the village doctress; and, with her worthy god-mother, seldom passed a day without exemplifying the benevolence of her nature.

My mother was born at Bridgwater in Somersetshire, in the house near the bridge, which is now occupied by Jonathan Chub, Esq. a relation of my beloved and lamented parent, and a gentleman who, to acknowledged worth and a powerful understanding, adds a superior claim to attention by all the acquirements of a scholar and a philosopher.

My mother, who never was what may be called a handsome woman, had nevertheless, in her youth, a peculiarly neat figure, and a vivacity of manner which obtained her many suitors. Among others, a young gentleman of good family, of the name of Storr, paid his addresses. My father was the object of my mother's choice, though her relations rather wished her to form a matrimonial alliance with Mr S. The conflict between affection and duty was at length decided in favour of my father, and the rejected lover set out in despair for Bristol. From thence, in a few days after his arrival, he took his passage in a merchantman for a distant part of the globe; and from that hour no intelligence ever arrived of his fate or fortune. I have often heard my mother speak of this gentleman with regret and sorrow.

My mother was between twenty and thirty years of age at the period of her marriage. The ceremony was performed at Dunnyatt, in the county of Somerset. My father was shortly after settled at

* A portrait of my grand-mother, when a girl, was seen by my mother at Haswell in Somersetshire, the seat of Sir C. K. Tynt, many years after I was born.

Bristol, and during the second year after their union a son was born to bless and honour them.*

Three years after my mother gave birth to a daughter, named Elizabeth, who died of the small-pox at the age of two years and ten months. In the second winter following this event, which deeply afflicted the most affectionate of parents, I was born. She had afterwards two sons: William, who died at the age of six years; and George, who is now a respectable merchant at Leghorn in Tuscany.

All the offspring of my parents were, in their infancy, uncommonly handsome, excepting myself. The boys were fair and lusty, with auburn hair, light blue eyes, and countenances peculiarly animated and lovely. I was swarthy; my eyes were singularly large in proportion to my face, which was small and round, exhibiting features peculiarly marked with the most pensive and melancholy cast.

The great difference betwixt my brothers and myself, in point of personal beauty, tended much to endear me to my parents, particularly to my father, whom I strongly resembled. The early propensities of my life were tinged with romantic and singular characteristics; some of which I shall here mention, as proofs that the mind is never to be diverted from its original bent; and that every event of my life has more or less been marked by the progressive evils of a too acute sensibility.

The nursery in which I passed my hours of infancy was so near the great aisle of the Minster, that the organ, which re-echoed its deep tones, accompanied by the chaunting of the choristers, was distinctly heard both at morning and evening service. I remember with what pleasure I used to listen, and

* I may with truth, and without vanity, make this remark. The estimable being here mentioned was named John; he died on the 7th of December 1790, at Leghorn in Tuscany, where he had been many years established as a merchant of the first respectability.

how much I was delighted whenever I was permitted to sit on the winding steps which led from the aisle to the cloisters. I can at this moment recall to memory the sensations I then experienced ; the tones that seemed to thrill through my heart, the longing which I felt to unite my feeble voice to the full anthem, and the awful, though sublime impression which the church service never failed to make upon my feelings. While my brothers were playing on the green before the Minster, the servant who attended us has often, by my earnest entreaties, suffered me to remain beneath the great eagle which stood in the centre of the aisle, to support the book from which the clergyman read the lessons of the day ; and nothing could keep me away, even in the coldest seasons, but the stern looks of an old man, whom I named Black John from the colour of his beard and complexion, and whose occupations within the sacred precincts were those of a bell-ringer and sexton.

As soon as I had learned to read, my great delight was that of learning epitaphs and monumental inscriptions. A story of melancholy import never failed to excite my attention ; and, before I was seven years old, I could correctly repeat Pope's Lines to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady ; Mason's Elegy on the Death of the beautiful Countess of Coventry ; and many smaller poems on similar subjects. I had then been attended two years by various masters. Mr Edmund Broadrip taught me music, my father having presented me with one of Kirkman's finest harpsichords, as an encitement to emulation. Even there my natural bent of mind evinced itself. The only melody which pleased me was that of the mournful and touching kind. Two of my earliest favourites were the celebrated ballad by Gay, beginning, "'Twas when the sea was roaring," and the simple pathetic stanzas of the "The Heavy Hours," by the poet lord Lyttelton. These, though nature had given me but little voice, I could at seven years

of age sing so pathetically, that my mother, to the latest hour of her life, never could bear to hear the latter of them repeated. They reminded her of sorrows, in which I have since painfully learned to sympathize.

The early hours of boarding-school study I passed under the tuition of the Misses More, sisters to the lady of that name whose talents have been so often celebrated. The education of their young pupils was undertaken by the five sisters. "In my mind's eye," I see them now before me; while every circumstance of those early days is minutely and indelibly impressed upon my memory.

I remember the first time I ever was present at a dramatic representation: it was the benefit of that great actor* who was proceeding rapidly towards the highest paths of fame, when death dropped the oblivious curtain, and closed the scene for ever. The part which he performed was King Lear; his wife, afterwards Mrs Fisher, played Cordelia, but not with sufficient *eclat* to render the profession an object for her future exertions. The whole school attended; Mr Powel's two daughters being then pupils of the Misses More. Mrs John Kemble, then Miss P. Hopkins, was also one of my school-fellows; as was the daughter of Mrs Palmer, formerly Miss Pritchard, and afterwards Mrs Lloyd. I mention these circumstances merely to prove that memory does not deceive me.

In my early days my father was prosperous, and my mother was the happiest of wives. She adored her children; she devoted her thoughts and divided her affections between them and the tenderest of husbands. Their spirits now, I trust, are in happier regions, blest, and re-united for ever.

If there could be found a fault in the conduct of my mother towards her children, it was that of a

* Mr Powel.

too unlimited indulgence, a too tender care, which but little served to arm their breast against the perpetual arrows of mortal vicissitude. My father's commercial concerns were crowned with prosperity. His house was opened by hospitality, and his generosity was only equalled by the liberality of fortune: every day augmented his successes; every hour seemed to increase his domestic felicity, till I attained my ninth year, when a change took place as sudden as it was unfortunate, at a moment when every luxury, every happiness, not only brightened the present, but gave promise of future felicity: a scheme was suggested to my father, as wild and romantic as it was perilous to hazard; which was no less than that of establishing a whale fishery on the coast of Labrador; and of civilizing the Esquimaux Indians, in order to employ them in the extensive undertaking. During two years this eccentric plan occupied his thoughts by day, his dreams by night: all the smiles of prosperity could not tranquillize the restless spirit: and, while he anticipated an acquirement of fame, he little considered the perils that would attend his fortune.

My mother (who, content with affluence, and happy in beholding the prosperity of her children, trembled at the fear of endangering either), in vain endeavoured to dissuade my father from putting his favourite scheme in practice. In the early part of his youth he had been accustomed to a sea life, and, being born an American, his restless spirit was ever busied in plans for the increase of wealth and honour to his native country; whose fame and interest were then united to those of Britain. After many dreams of success and many conflicts betwixt prudence and ambition, he resolved on putting his scheme in practice; the potent witchery possessed his brain, and all the persuasive powers of reason shrunk before its magic.

Full of the important business, my misguided parent repaired to the metropolis, and on his arrival laid the

plan before the late earl of Hillsborough, sir Hugh Palliser, the late earl of Bristol, lord Chatham (father to the present Mr William Pitt), the chancellor lord Northington, who was my godfather, and several other equally distinguished personages; who all not only approved the plan but commended the laudable and public spirit which induced my father to suggest it. The prospect appeared full of promise, and the Labrador whale fishery was expected to be equally productive with that of Greenland. My parent's commercial connections were of the highest respectability; while his own name for worth and integrity gave a powerful sanction to the eccentric undertaking.

In order to facilitate this plan, my father deemed it absolutely necessary to reside at least two years in America. My mother, who felt an invincible antipathy to the sea, heard his determination with grief and horror. All the persuasive powers of affection failed to detain him; all the pleadings of reason, prudence, a fond wife, and an infant family, proved ineffectual. My father was determined on departing, and my mother's unconquerable timidity prevented her being the companion of his voyage. From this epocha I date the sorrows of my family.

He sailed for America. His eldest son, John, was previously placed in a mercantile house at Leghorn. My younger brothers and myself remained with my mother at Bristol. Two years was the limited time of his absence, and, on his departure, the sorrow of my parents was reciprocal. My mother's heart was almost bursting with anguish; but even death would to her have been preferable to the horrors of crossing a tempestuous ocean and quitting her children; my father having resolved on leaving my brothers and myself in England for education.

Still the comforts, and even the luxuries of life, distinguished our habitation. The tenderness of my mother's affection made her lavish of every elegance; and the darlings of her bosom were dressed, waited

on, watched, and indulged with a degree of fondness bordering on folly. - My clothes were sent for from London; my fancy was indulged to the extent of its caprices; I was flattered and praised into a belief that I was a being of superior order. To sing, to play a lesson on the harpsicord, to recite an elegy, and to make doggerel verses, made the extent of my occupations, while my person improved, and my mother's indulgence was almost unexampled.

My father, several years before his departure for America, had removed from the Minster-house, and resided in one larger, and more convenient for his increased family. This habitation was elegantly arranged; all the luxuries of plate, silk furniture, foreign wines, &c. evinced his knowledge of what was worth enjoying, and displayed that warm hospitality which is often the characteristic of a British merchant. This disposition for the good things of the world influenced even the disposal of his children's comforts. The bed in which I slept was of the richest crimson damask; the dresses which we wore were of the finest cambric:—during the summer months we were sent to Clifton-hill for the advantages of a purer air; and I never was permitted to board at school, or to pass a night of separation from the fondest of mothers.

Many months elapsed, and my mother continued to receive the kindest letters from that husband, whose rash scheme filled her bosom with regret and apprehension. At length the intervals became more frequent and protracted. The professions of regard, no longer flowing from the heart, assumed a laboured style, and seemed rather the efforts of honourable feeling than the involuntary language of confidential affection. My mother felt the change, and her affliction was infinite.

At length a total silence of several months awoke her mind to the sorrows of neglect, the torture of compunction; she now lamented the timidity which

had divided her from a husband's bosom, the natural fondness which had bound her to her children ;—for while her heart bled with sorrow and palpitated with apprehension, the dreadful secret was unfolded,—and the cause of my father's silence was discovered to be a new attachment ;—a mistress, whose resisting nerves could brave the stormy ocean, and who had consented to remain two years with him in the frozen wilds of America.

This intelligence nearly annihilated my mother, whose mind, though not strongly organized, was tenderly susceptible. She resigned herself to grief. I was then at an age to feel and to participate in her sorrows. I often wept to see her weep ; I tried all my little skill to soothe her, but in vain : the first shock was followed by calamities of a different nature. The scheme in which my father had embarked his fortune failed, the Indians rose in a body, burst his settlement, murdered many of his people, and turned the produce of their toil adrift on the wide and merciless ocean. The noble patrons of his plan deceived him in their assurances of marine protection, and the island of promise presented a scene of barbarous desolation. This misfortune was rapidly followed by other commercial losses : and to complete the vexations which pressed heavily on my mother, her rash husband gave a bill of sale of his whole property, by the authority of which we were obliged to quit our home, and to endure those accumulated vicissitudes for which there appeared no remedy.

It was at this period of trial that my mother was enabled to prove, by that unerring touchstone, adversity, who were her real and disinterested friends. Many with affected commiseration dropped a tear, or rather seemed to drop one, on the disappointments of our family ; while others, with a malignant triumph, condemned the expensive style in which my father had reared his children ; the studied elegance which had characterized my mother's dress and habi-

tation, and the hospitality which was now marked by the ungrateful epithet of prodigal luxuriance, but which had evinced the open liberality of my father's heart.

At this period my brother William died. He was only six years of age, but a promising and most lovely infant. His sudden death, in consequence of the measles, nearly deprived my mother of her senses. She was deeply affected : but she found, after a period of time, that consolation which, springing from the bosom of an amiable friend, doubly solaced her afflictions. This female was one of the most estimable of her sex ; she had been the widow of sir Charles Erskine, and was then the wife of a respectable medical man who resided at Bristol.

In the society of lady Erskine my mother gradually recovered her serenity of mind, or rather found it soften into a religious resignation. But the event of her domestic loss, by death, was less painful than that which she felt in the alienation of my father's affections. She frequently heard that he resided in America with his mistress ; till, at the expiration of another year, she received a summons to meet him in London.

Language would but feebly describe the varying emotions which struggled in her bosom. At this interesting era she was preparing to encounter the freezing scorn, or the contrite glances, of either an estranged or a repentant husband ; in either case her situation was replete with anticipated chagrin ; for she loved him too tenderly not to participate even in the anguish of his compunction. His letter, which was coldly civil, requested particularly that the children might be the companions of her journey. We departed for the metropolis.

I was not then quite ten years old, though so tall and formed in my person that I might have passed for twelve or thirteen. My brother George was a few years younger. On our arrival in London we

repaired to my father's lodgings in Spring-gardens. He received us, after three years absence, with a mixture of pain and pleasure; he embraced us with tears, and his voice was scarcely articulate. My mother's agitation was indescribable; she received a cold embrace at their meeting;—it was the last she ever received from her alienated husband.

As soon as the first conflicts seemed to subside, my father informed my mother that he was determined to place my brother and myself at a school in the vicinity of London; that he purposed very shortly returning to America, and that he would readily pay for my mother's board in any private and respectable family. This information seemed like a death-blow to their domestic hopes. A freezing, formal, premeditated separation from a wife who was guiltless of any crime, who was as innocent as an angel, seemed the very extent of decided misery. It was in vain that my mother essayed to change his resolution, and influence his heart in pronouncing a milder judgment; my father was held by a fatal fascination; he was the slave of a young and artful woman, who had availed herself of his American solitude, to undermine his affections for his wife and the felicity of his family.

This deviation from domestic faith was the only dark shade that marked my father's character. He possessed a soul brave, liberal, enlightened and ingenuous. He felt the impropriety of his conduct. Yet, though his mind was strongly organized, though his understanding was capacious, and his sense of honour delicate even to fastidiousness, he was still the dupe of his passions, the victim of an unfortunate attachment.

Within a few days of our arrival in London we were placed for education in a school at Chelsea. The mistress of this seminary was perhaps one of the most extraordinary women that ever graced, or disgraced society; her name was Meribah Lorrington. She was the most extensively accomplished female

that I ever remember to have met with : her mental powers were no less capable of cultivation than superiorly cultivated. Her father, whose name was Hull, had from her infancy been the master of an academy at Earl's Court, near Fulham ; and early after his marriage losing his wife, he resolved on giving this daughter a masculine education. Meribah was early instructed in all the modern accomplishments, as well as in classical knowledge. She was mistress of the Latin, French, and Italian languages ; she was said to be a perfect arithmetician and astronomer, and possessed the art of painting on silk to a degree of exquisite perfection. But, alas ! with all these advantages she was addicted to one vice, which at times so completely absorbed her faculties, as to deprive her of every power, either mental or corporeal. Thus, daily and hourly, her superior acquirements, her enlightened understanding, yielded to the intemperance of her ruling infatuation, and every power of reflection seemed lost in the unfeminine propensity.

All that I ever learned I acquired from this extraordinary woman. In those hours when her senses were not intoxicated, she would delight in the task of instructing me. She had only five or six pupils, and it was my lot to be her particular favourite. She always, out of school, called me her little friend, and made no scruple of conversing with me, (sometimes half the night, for I slept in her chamber), on domestic and confidential affairs. I felt for her a very sincere affection, and I listened with peculiar attention to all the lessons she inculcated. Once I recollect her mentioning the particular failing which disgraced so intelligent a being : she pleaded, in excuse of it, the immitigable regret of a widowed heart, and with compunction declared, that she flew to intoxication as the only refuge from the pang of prevailing sorrow. I continued more than twelve months under the care of Mrs. Lorrington, during which period my mother boarded in a clergyman's family at Chelsea. I ap-

plied rigidly to study, and acquired a taste for books, which has never, from that time, deserted me. Mrs Lorrington frequently read to me after school hours, and I to her: I sometimes indulged my fancy in writing verses, or composing rebuses; and my governess never failed to applaud the juvenile compositions I presented to her. Some of them, which I preserved and printed in a small volume shortly after my marriage, were written when I was between twelve and thirteen years of age; but as love was the theme of my poetical phantasies, I never showed them to my mother, till I was about to publish them.

It was my custom, every Sunday evening, to drink tea with my mother. During one of those visits, a captain in the British navy, a friend of my father's, became so partial to my person and manners that a proposal of marriage shortly after followed. My mother was astonished when she heard it, and, as soon as she recovered from her surprise, inquired of my suitor how old he thought me: his reply was, "about sixteen." My mother smiled, and informed him that I was then not quite thirteen. He appeared to be sceptical on the subject, till he was again assured of the fact, when he took his leave with evident chagrin, but not without expressing his hopes that, on his return to England, for he was going on a two year's expedition, I should be still disengaged. His ship foundered at sea a few months after, and this amiable gallant officer perished.

I had remained a year and two months with Mrs Lorrington, when pecuniary derangements obliged her to give up her school. Her father's manners were singularly disgusting, as was his appearance; for he wore a silvery beard which reached to his breast; and a kind of Persian robe which gave him the external appearance of a necromancer. He was of the anabaptist persuasion, and so stern in his conversation that the young pupils were exposed to perpetual terror: added to these circumstances, the

failing of his daughter became so evident, that even during school hours she was frequently in a state of confirmed intoxication. These events conspired to break up the establishment, and I was shortly after removed to a boarding-school at Battersea.

The mistress of this seminary, Mrs Leigh, was a lively, sensible, and accomplished woman, her daughter was only a few years older than myself, and extremely amiable as well as lovely. Here I might have been happy, but my father's remissness in sending pecuniary supplies, and my mother's dread of pecuniary inconvenience induced her to remove me : my brother nevertheless still remained under the care of the reverend Mr Gore, at Chelsea.

Several months elapsed, and no remittance arrived from my father. I was now near fourteen years old, and my mother began to foresee the vicissitudes to which my youth might be exposed, unprotected, tenderly educated, and without the advantages of fortune. My father's impracticable scheme had impoverished his fortune, and deprived his children of that affluence which, in their infancy, they had been taught to hope for. I cannot speak of my own person, but my partial friends were too apt to flatter me. I was naturally of a pensive and melancholy character ; my reflections on the changes of fortune frequently gave me an air of dejection which perhaps excited an interest beyond what might have been awakened by the vivacity or bloom of juvenility.

I adored my mother ; she was the mildest, the most unoffending of existing mortals ; her temper was cheerful, as her heart was innocent : she beheld her children as it seemed fatherless, and she resolved, by honourable means, to support them. For this purpose a convenient house was hired at Little Chelsea, and furnished, for a ladies' boarding-school. Assistants of every kind were engaged, and I was deemed worthy of an occupation that flattered my self-love, and impressed my mind with a sort of

domestic consequence. The English language was my department in the seminary, and I was permitted to select passages both in prose and verse for the studies of my infant pupils: it was also my occupation to superintend their wardrobes, to see them dressed and undressed by the servants or half-boarders, and to read sacred and moral lessons, on saints' days and Sunday evenings.

Shortly after my mother had established herself at Chelsea, on a summer's evening, as I was sitting at the window, I heard a deep sigh, or rather a groan of anguish, which suddenly attracted my attention. The night was approaching rapidly, and I looked towards the gate before the house, where I observed a woman evidently labouring under excessive affliction; I instantly descended and approached her. She, bursting into tears, asked whether I did not know her. Her dress was torn and filthy;—she was almost naked;—and an old bonnet, which nearly hid her face, so completely disfigured her features that I had not the smallest idea of the person who was then almost sinking before me. I gave her a small sum of money, and inquired the cause of her apparent agony: she took my hand and pressed it her lips.—“Sweet girl,” said she, “you are still the angel I ever knew you!”—I was astonished; she raised her bonnet—her fine dark eyes met mine. It was Mrs Lorrington.—I led her into the house; my mother was not at home. I took her to my chamber, and, with the assistance of a lady who was our French teacher, I clothed and comforted her. She refused to say how she came to be in so deplorable a situation; and took her leave. It was in vain that I entreated, that I conjured her to let me know where I might send to her. She refused to give me her address, but promised that in a few days she would call on me again. It is impossible to describe the wretched appearance of this accomplished woman! The failing to which she had now yielded, as to a monster that would

destroy her, was evident even at the moment when she was speaking to me. I saw no more of her : but to my infinite regret I was informed some years after, that she had died, the martyr of a premature decay, brought on by the indulgence of her propensity to intoxication—in the workhouse of Chelsea !

The number of my mother's pupils, in a few months, amounted to ten or twelve : and just at a period when an honourable independence promised to cheer the days of an unexampled parent, my father unexpectedly returned from America. The pride of his soul was deeply wounded by the step which my mother had taken : he was offended even beyond the bounds of reason : he considered his name as disgraced, his conjugal reputation tarnished, by the public mode which his wife had adopted of revealing to the world her unprotected situation. A prouder heart never palpitated in the breast of man than that of my father : tenacious of fame, ardent in the pursuit of visionary schemes, he could not endure the exposure of his altered fortune ; while hope still beguiled him with her flattering promise, that time would favour his projects, and fortune, at some future period, reward him with success.

At the expiration of eight months my mother, by my father's positive command, broke up her establishment, and returned to London. She engaged lodgings in the neighbourhood of Marylebone. My father then resided in Green street, Grosvenor square. His provision for his family was scanty, his visits few. He had a new scheme on foot respecting the Labrador coast, the particulars of which I do not remember ; and all his zeal, united with all his interest, was employed in promoting its accomplishment. My mother, knowing that my father publicly resided with his mistress, did not even hope for his returning affection. She devoted herself to her children, and endured her sorrows with the patience of conscious rectitude.

At this period my father frequently called upon us, and often attended me while we walked in the fields near Marylebone. His conversation was generally of a domestic nature, and he always lamented that fatal attachment which was now too strongly cemented by time and obligations ever to be dissolved without an ample provision for Elenor, which was the name of my father's mistress. In one of our morning walks we called upon the earl of Northington, my father having some commercial business to communicate to his lordship. Lord Northington then resided in Berkeley square, two doors from Hill street, in the house which is now occupied by lord Robert Spencer. We were received with the most marked attention and politeness, (I was presented as the god-daughter of the late chancellor lord Northington), and my father was requested to dine with his lordship a few days after. From this period I frequently saw lord Northington, and always experienced from him the most flattering and gratifying civility. I was then a child, not more than fourteen years of age.

The finishing points of my education I received at Oxford-house, Marylebone: I was at this period within a few months of fifteen years of age, tall, and nearly such as my partial friends, the few whose affection have followed me from childhood, remember me. My early love for lyric harmony had led me to a fondness for the more sublime scenes of dramatic poetry. I embraced every leisure moment to write verses; I even fancied that I could compose a tragedy, and more than once unsuccessfully attempted the arduous undertaking.

The dancing master at Oxford-house, Mr Hussey, was then ballet-master at Covent Garden theatre. Mrs Hervey, the governess, mentioned me to him as possessing an extraordinary genius for dramatic exhibitions. My figure was commanding for my age, and (my father's pecuniary embarrassments augmenting by the failure of another American project) my

mother was consulted as to the propriety of my making the stage my profession. Many cited examples of females who, even in that perilous and arduous situation, preserved an unspotted fame, inclined her to listen to the suggestion, and to allow of my consulting some master of the art, as to my capability of becoming an ornament to the theatre.

Previous to this idea my father had again quitted England: he left his wife with assurances of good-will—his children with all the agonies of parental regret. When he took leave of my mother, his emphatic words were these—I never shall forget them—“Take care that no dishonour falls upon my daughter. If she is not safe at my return I will annihilate you!” My mother heard the stern injunction, and trembled while he repeated it.

I was, in consequence of my wish to appear on the stage, introduced to Mr Hull of Covent Garden theatre; he then resided in King street, Soho. He heard me recite some passages of the character of Jane Shore, and seemed delighted with my attempt. I was shortly after presented, by a friend of my mother's, to Mr Garrick; Mr Murphy, the celebrated dramatic poet, was one of the party; and we passed the evening at the house of the British Roscius in the Adelphi. This was during the last year that he dignified the profession by his public appearance. Mr Garrick's encomiums were of the most gratifying kind. He determined that he would appear in the same play with me on the first night's trial; but what part to choose for my *début* was a difficult question. I was too young for anything beyond the girlish character; and the dignity of tragedy afforded but few opportunities for the display of such juvenile talents. After some hesitation, my tutor fixed on the part of Cordelia. His own Lear can never be forgotten.

It was not till the period when everything was arranged for my appearance, that the last solemn

injunction so emphatically uttered by my father, nearly palsied my mother's resolution. She dreaded the perils, the temptations to which an unprotected girl would be exposed in so public a situation; while my ardent fancy was busied in contemplating a thousand triumphs, in which my vanity would be publicly gratified, without the smallest sacrifice of my private character.

While this plan was in agitation, I was one evening at Drury lane theatre with my mother and a small party of her friends, when an officer entered the box. His eyes were fixed on me, and his persevering attention at length nearly overwhelmed me with confusion. The entertainment being finished, we departed. The stranger followed us. At that period my mother resided in Southampton buildings, Chancery lane, for the protection which a venerable and respectable friend offered, at a moment when it was so necessary. This friend was the late Samuel Cox, esq. the intimate friend of Mr Garrick, and an honour to those laws of which he was a distinguished professor.

It was Mr Garrick's particular request that I would frequent the theatre as much as possible till the period fixed on for my appearance on the stage. I had now just completed my fifteenth year, and my little heart throbbed with impatience for the hour of trial. My tutor was most sanguine in his expectations of my success, and every rehearsal seemed to strengthen his flattering opinion.

It happened that, several evenings following, the stranger officer, whose name, for motives of delicacy towards his family, I forbear to mention, followed me to and from the theatre. It was in vain that he offered his attentions in the box; my mother's frown and assiduous care repulsed them effectually. But the perseverance of a bad mind in the accomplishment of a bad action is not to be subdued. A letter was written and conveyed to me through the hands

of a female servant; I opened it; I read a declaration of the most ardent love: the writer avowed himself the son of lady *****, and offered marriage; he was graceful and handsome; I instantly delivered the letter to my mother;—and shortly after he was, by an acquaintance, presented with decorous ceremony.

The idea of my appearing on the stage seemed to distract this accomplished suitor. My mother, who but *half* approved a dramatic life, was more than *half* inclined to favour the addresses of captain ****. The injunction of my father every hour became more indelibly impressed on her memory; she knew his stern and invincible sense of honour too well to hazard the thought of awakening it to vengeance.

After a short period, the friend who had presented capt. *****, alarmed for my safety, and actuated by a liberal wish to defend me from the artifice of his associate, waited on my mother; and, after some hesitation, informed her that my lover was already married! that he had a young and amiable wife in a sister kingdom, and that he apprehended some diabolical stratagem for the enthrallment of my honour. My mother's consternation was infinite: the important secret was communicated to me, and I felt little regret in the loss of a husband, when I reflected that a matrimonial alliance would have compelled me to relinquish my theatrical profession.

I had also at this period another professed admirer; a man of a splendid fortune, but nearly old enough to be my grandfather: this suit I never would listen to; and the drama, the delightful drama, seemed the very criterion of all human happiness.

I now found myself an object of attention whenever I appeared at the theatre. I had been too often in public not to be observed; and it was buzzed about that I was the juvenile pupil of Garrick,—the promised Cordelia. My person improved daily; yet a sort of dignified air, which from a child I had acquired, effectually shielded me from the attacks of imperti-

nence or curiosity. Garrick was delighted with everything I did. He would sometimes dance a minuet with me, sometimes request me to sing the favourite ballads of the day; but the circumstance which most pleased him, was my tone of voice, which he frequently told me closely resembled that of his favourite Cibber.

Never shall I forget the enchanting hours which I passed in Mr Garrick's society; he appeared to me as one who possessed more power, both to awe and to attract, than any man I ever met with. His smile was fascinating, but he had at times a restless peevishness of tone which excessively affected his hearers; at least it affected me so that I never shall forget it.

Opposite to the house in which I resided, lived John Vernon, esq. an eminent solicitor. I observed a young inmate of his habitation frequently watching me with more than ordinary attention. He was handsome in person, and his countenance was overcast by a sort of languor, the effect of sickness, which rendered it peculiarly interesting. Frequently when I approached the window of our drawing-room this young observer would bow, or turn away with evident emotion. I related the circumstance to my mother, and from that time the lower shutters of our windows were perpetually closed. The young lawyer often excited my mirth, and my mother's indignation; and the injunction of my father was frequently repeated by her, with the addition of her wish, that I was "once well married."

Every attention which was now paid to me augmented my dear mother's apprehensions. She fancied every man a seducer, and every hour an hour of accumulating peril! I know what she was doomed to feel, for that Being who formed my sensitive and perpetually aching heart knows that I have *since felt it*.

Among other friends who were in the habit of

visiting my mother there was one, a Mr Wayman, an attorney, of whom she entertained the highest opinion. He was distinguished by the patronage of Mr Cox, and his reputation required no other voucher. One evening a party of six was proposed for the following Sunday; with much persuasion my mother consented to go, and to allow that I should also attend her. Greenwich was the place fixed on for the dinner; and we prepared for the day of recreation. It was then the fashion to wear silks. I remember that I wore a nightgown of pale blue lustring, with a chip hat, trimmed with ribands of the same colour. Never was I dressed so perfectly to my own satisfaction; I anticipated a day of admiration;—heaven can bear witness that to me it was a day of fatal victory!

On our stopping at the Star and Garter, at Greenwich, the person who came to hand me from the carriage was our opposite neighbour in Southampton-buildings. I was confused; but my mother was indignant. Mr Wayman presented his young friend—that friend who was ordained to be MY HUSBAND!

Our party dined; and early in the evening we returned to London. Mr Robinson remained at Greenwich for the benefit of the air, being recently recovered from a fit of sickness. During the remainder of the evening, Mr Wayman expatiated on the many good qualities of his friend Mr Robinson: spoke of his future expectations from a rich old uncle; of his probable advancement in his profession; and, more than all, of his enthusiastic admiration of me.

A few days after, Mr Robinson paid my mother a visit. We had now removed to Villars street, York buildings; my mother's fondness for books of a moral and religious character was not lost upon my new lover; and elegantly bound editions of Hervey's Meditations with some others of a similar description were presented, as small tokens of admiration and respect. My mother was beguiled by these little

interesting attentions, and soon began to feel a strong predilection in favour of Mr Robinson.

Every day some new mark of respect augmented my mother's favourable opinion ; till Mr Robinson became so great a favourite, that he seemed to her the most perfect of existing beings. Just at this period my brother George sickened for the small-pox ; my mother idolized him ; he was dangerously ill. Mr Robinson was indefatigable in his attentions, and my appearance on the stage was postponed till the period of his perfect recovery. Day and night Mr Robinson devoted himself to the task of consoling my mother, and of attending to her darling boy ; hourly, and indeed momentarily, Mr Robinson's praises were reiterated with enthusiasm by my mother. He was " the kindest, the best of mortals ! " the least addicted to worldly follies, and the man, of all others, whom she should adore as a *son-in-law*.

My brother recovered at the period when I sickened from the infection of his disease. I felt little terror at the approaches of a dangerous and deforming malady ; for, I know not why, but personal beauty has never been to me an object of material solicitude. It was now that Mr Robinson exerted all his assiduity to win my affections ; it was when a destructive disorder menaced my features, and the few graces that nature had lent them, that he professed a disinterested fondness ; every day he attended with the zeal of a brother, and that zeal made an impression of gratitude upon my heart, which was the source of all my succeeding sorrows.

During my illness Mr Robinson so powerfully wrought upon the feelings of my mother, that she prevailed on me to promise, in case I should recover, to give him my hand in marriage. The words of my father were frequently repeated, not without some inuendos that I refused my ready consent to a union with Mr Robinson, from a blind partiality to the libertine captain ***** . Repeatedly urged and

hourly reminded of my father's vow, I at last consented; and the bans were published while I was yet lying on a bed of sickness;—I was then only a few months advanced in my sixteenth year.

My mother, whose affection for me was boundless, notwithstanding her hopes of my forming an alliance that would be productive of felicity, still felt the most severe pain at the thought of our approaching separation. She was estranged from a husband's affections; she had treasured up all her fondest hopes in the society of an only daughter; she knew that no earthly pleasure can compensate for the loss of that sweet sympathy which is the bond of union betwixt child and parent. Her regrets were infinite as they were evident;—and Mr Robinson, in order to remove any obstacle which this consideration might throw in the way of our marriage, voluntarily proposed that she should reside with us. He represented me as too young and inexperienced to superintend domestic concerns; and while he flattered my mother's *amour propre*, he rather requested her aid as a sacrifice to his interest than as an obligation conferred on her.

The bans were published three successive Sundays at St Martin's church, and the day was fixed for our marriage,—*the twelfth of April*. It was not till all preliminaries were adjusted that Mr Robinson, with much apparent agitation, suggested the necessity of keeping our union a secret. I was astonished at the proposal; but two reasons were given for his having made it, both of which seemed plausible; the first was, that Mr Robinson had still three months to serve before his articles to Messrs Vernon and Elderton expired: and the second was, the hope which a young lady entertained of forming a matrimonial union with Mr Robinson as soon as that period should arrive. The latter reason alarmed me, but I was most solemnly assured that all the affection was cherished on the lady's part; that Mr Robinson was

particularly averse to the idea of such a marriage, and that as soon as he should become of age his independence would place him beyond the control of any person whatsoever.

I now proposed deferring our wedding-day till that period. I pleaded that I thought myself too young to encounter the cares and important duties of domestic life; I shrunk from the idea of everything clandestine, and anticipated a thousand ill consequences that might attend on a concealed marriage. My scruples only seemed to increase Mr Robinson's impatience for that ceremony which should make me his for ever. He represented to my mother the disapprobation which my father would not fail to evince at my adopting a theatrical life, in preference to engaging in an honourable and prosperous connection. He so powerfully worked upon the credulity of my beloved parent, that she became a decided convert to his opinions. My youth, my person, he represented as the destined snares for my honour on a public stage, where all the attractions of the mimic scene would combine to render me a fascinating object. He also persuaded her that my health would suffer by the fatigues and exertions of the profession, and that probably I might be induced to marry some man who would not approve of a *mother's* forming a part in our *domestic establishment*.

These circumstances were repeatedly urged in favour of the union. Still I felt an almost instinctive repugnance at the thought of a clandestine marriage. My mother, whose parental fondness was ever watchful for my safety, now imagined that my objections proceeded from a fixed partiality towards the libertine captain *****, who, though he had not the temerity to present himself before my mother, persisted in writing to me, and in following me whenever I appeared in public. I never spoke to him after the story of his marriage was repeated to my

mother ; I never corresponded with him, but felt a decided and proud indignation whenever his name was mentioned in my presence.

My appearance on the stage had been put off from time to time, till Mr Garrick became impatient, and desired my mother to allow of his fixing the night of important trial. It was now that Mr Robinson and my mother united in persuading me to relinquish my project ; and so perpetually, during three days, was I tormented on the subject,—so ridiculed for having permitted the bans to be published, and afterwards hesitating to fulfil my contract, that I consented—and was married.

As soon as the day of my wedding was fixed, it was deemed necessary that a total revolution should take place in my external appearance. I had till that period worn the habit of a child ; and the dress of a woman so suddenly assumed sat rather awkwardly upon me. Still, so juvenile was my appearance, that even two years after my union with Mr Robinson I was always accosted with the appellation of *Miss*, whenever I entered a shop, or was in company with strangers. My manners were no less childish than my appearance ; only three months before I became a wife, I had dressed a doll ; and such was my dislike to the idea of a matrimonial alliance, that the only circumstance which induced me to marry was, that of being still permitted to reside with my mother, and to live separated, at least for some time, from my husband.

My heart, even when I knelt at the altar, was as free from any tender impression as it had been at the moment of my birth. I knew not the sensation of any sentiment beyond that of esteem ; love was still a stranger to my bosom. I had never, then, seen the being who was destined to inspire a thought which might influence my fancy, or excite an interest in my mind ; and I well remember that even while I was

pronouncing the marriage vow, my fancy involuntarily wandered to that scene where I had hoped to support myself with *éclat* and reputation.

The ceremony was performed by Dr Saunders, the venerable vicar of St Martin's, who, at the conclusion of the ceremony, declared that he had never before performed the office for so young a bride. The clerk officiated as father; my mother, and the woman who opened the pews, were the only witnesses to the union. I was dressed in the habit of a quaker; a society to which, in early youth, I was particularly partial. From the church we repaired to the house of a female friend, where a splendid breakfast was waiting: I changed my dress to one of white muslin, a chip hat adorned with white ribbons, a white sarsnet scarf-cloak, and slippers of white satin embroidered with silver. I mention these trifling circumstances because they lead to some others of more importance.

From the house of my mother's friend we set out for the inn at Maidenhead-bridge, Mr Robinson and myself in a phaeton, my mother in a post-chaise; we were also accompanied by a gentleman by the name of Balack, a very intimate acquaintance and school-fellow of my husband;* who was not apprised of our wedding, but who nevertheless considered Mr Robinson as my avowed suitor.

On his first seeing me, he remarked that I was "*dressed like a bride.*" The observation overwhelmed me with confusion. During the day I was more than pensive, I was melancholy; I considered all that had passed as a vision, and would scarcely persuade myself that the union which I had permitted to be solemnized was indissoluble. My mother frequently remarked my evident chagrin; and in the evening, while we strolled together in the garden which was opposite the inn, I told her, with a torrent

* This gentleman has since, upon the death of his uncle taken the name of Hanway.

of tears, the vouchers of my sincerity, that I was the most wretched of mortals ! that I felt the most perfect esteem for Mr Robinson ; but that, according to my ideas of domestic happiness, there should be a warm and powerful union of soul, to which I was yet totally a stranger.

During my absence from town a letter was written to Mr Garrick, informing him that an advantageous marriage (for my mother considered Mr Robinson as the legal heir to a handsome fortune, together with an estate in South Wales) had induced me to relinquish my theatrical prospects ; and a few weeks after, meeting Mr Garrick in the street, he congratulated me on my union, and expressed the warmest wishes for my future happiness.

The day after our marriage Mr Robinson proposed dining at Henley-upon-Thames. My mother would not venture in the phaeton, and Mr Balack occupied the place which was declined by her. On taking his seat between Mr Robinson and myself, he remarked, “ Were you *married*, I should think of the holy anathema—cursed is he that parteth *man* and *wife*.” My countenance was suddenly suffused with the deepest scarlet : I cautiously concealed the effect which his remarks had produced, and we proceeded on our journey.

Descending a steep hill betwixt Maidenhead-thicket and Henley, we met a drove of oxen. The comic opera of the Padlock was then in high celebrity, and our facetious little friend a second time disconcerted me, by saying, in the words of Don Diego, “ I don’t like oxen, I wish they had been a flock of sheep !” I now began to discover the variety of unpleasant sensations which, even undesignedly, must arise from conversation, in the presence of those who were clandestinely married. I also trembled with apprehension, lest anything disgraceful should attach itself to my fame, by being seen under doubtful circumstances in the society of Mr Robinson.

On our return to London after ten days absence, a house was hired in Great Queen street, Lincoln's inn fields. It was a large old fashioned mansion, and stood on the spot where the Freemasons' tavern has been since erected. This house was the property of a lady, an acquaintance of my mother, the widow of Mr Worlidge, an artist of considerable celebrity. It was handsomely furnished, and contained many valuable pictures by various masters. I resided with my mother; Mr Robinson continued at the house of Messrs Vernon and Elderton, in Southampton buildings.

The stated time of concealment elapsed, and still my husband was perpetually at chambers in Lincoln's inn. Still he was evidently under the control of his articles, and still desirous that our marriage should be kept a secret. My mother began to feel a considerable degree of inquietude upon the subject; particularly as she was informed that Mr Robinson was not exactly in that state of expectation which he had represented. She found that he was already of age, and that he had still some months to serve of his clerkship. She also heard that he was not the nephew and heir, but the illegitimate son of the man from whom he expected a handsome fortune: though he had an elder brother, now commodore William Robinson, who was then in India, reaping the fruits of industry under the patronage of lord Clive.

It was now for the first time that my mother repented the influence she had used in promoting our union. She informed Mr Robinson that she apprehended some gross deception on his part, and that she would no longer consent to our marriage being kept a secret. The reputation of a darling child, she alleged, was at stake; and though during a few weeks the world might have been kept in ignorance of my marriage, some circumstances that had transpired, now rendered an immediate disclosure absolutely necessary.

Mr Robinson, finding my mother inexorable, resolved on setting out for Wales, in order to avow our marriage and to present me to his *uncle*, for such he still obstinately denominated his father. My mother wished to avail herself of this opportunity to visit her friends at Bristol, and accordingly we set out on the journey; we passed through Oxford; visited the different colleges; proceeded to Blenheim, and made the *tour*, a tour of pleasure, with the hope of soothing my mother's resentment, and exhilarating my spirits, which were now perpetually dejected. I cannot help mentioning that, shortly after my marriage, I formed an acquaintance with a young lady, whose mind was no less romantic than my own; and while Mr Robinson was occupied at chambers, we almost daily passed our morning hours in Westminster Abbey. It was to me a soothing and a gratifying scene of meditation.—I have often remained in the gloomy chapels of that sublime fabric, till I became as it were an inhabitant of another world. The dim light of the Gothic windows, the vibration of my footsteps along the lofty aisles, the train of reflections that the scene inspired, were all suited to the temper of my soul: and the melancholy propensities of my earliest infancy seemed to revive with an instinctive energy, which rendered them the leading characteristics of my existence. Indeed the world has mistaken the character of my mind; I have ever been the reverse of volatile and dissipated; I mean not to write my own eulogy, though with the candid and sensitive mind I shall, I trust, succeed in my vindication.

On our arrival at Bristol, Mr Robinson thought it most adviseable to proceed towards Tregunter, the seat of his *uncle*, alone, in order to prepare him for my cordial reception, or to avoid the mortification I should experience, should he refuse to sanction our union. Mr Robinson left me a few guineas, and promised that his absence should be short and his affection increasing.

I had now been married near four months : and, though love was not the basis of my fidelity, honour, and a refined sense of feminine rectitude, attached me to the interest as well as to the person of my husband. I considered chastity as the brightest ornament that could embellish the female mind ; and I regulated my conduct to that tenour which has principal more than affection to strengthen its progress.

At Bristol my mother experienced the most gratifying reception ; all her former friends rejoiced to see her ; I was invited daily to feasts of hospitality, and I found that fortune was, to common minds, a never-failing passport. Mr Robinson was represented as a young man of considerable expectations, and his wife was consequently again received as the daughter of Mr Darby. The house in which I first opened my eyes to this world of sorrow, the minister, its green, the school-house where I had passed many days, the tomb of my lost relatives in the church of St Augustine, were all visited by me with a sweet and melancholy interest. But the cathedral, the brass eagle in the middle aisle, under which, when an infant, I used to sit and join in the loud anthem, or chaunt the morning service, most sensibly attached me. I longed again to occupy my place beneath its expanding wings, and once I went, before the service began, to gratify my inclination.

Language cannot describe the sort of sensation which I felt, when I heard the well-known, long-remembered organ flinging its loud peal through the gothic structure. I hastened to the cloisters. The nursery windows were dim, and shattered ; the house was sinking to decay. The mouldering walk was gloomy, and my spirits were depressed beyond description : I stood alone, rapt in meditation : “ Here,” said I, “ did my infant feet pace to and fro ; here, did I climb the long stone bench, and swiftly measure it, at the peril of my safety. On those dark and winding steps, did I sit and listen to the full-toned organ, the loud anthem, and the bell, which called the pa-

rishioners to prayer." I entered the cathedral once more; I read and re-read the monumental inscriptions: I paused upon the grave of Powell; I dropped a tear on the small square ground tablet which bore the name of Evelyn.* Ah! how little has the misjudging world known of what has passed in my mind, even in the apparently gayest moments of my existence! How much have I regretted that ever I was born, even when I have been surrounded with all that could gratify the vanity of woman!

Mr Robinson on his arrival at Tregunter dispatched a letter informing me that his *uncle* seemed disposed to act handsomely, but that he had only ventured to avow an intention to marry, fearful of abruptly declaring that he had been already some months a husband. Mr Harris, for that was the name of my father-in-law, replied, that "he hoped the object of his choice was not *too young*!" At this question Mr Robinson was somewhat disconcerted.—"A young wife," continued Mr Harris, "cannot mend a man's fortune: how old is the girl you have chosen?"

"She is nearly seventeen!"

I was then only fifteen and a few months.

"I hope she is not handsome," was the second observation. "You say she is not rich; and beauty, without money, is but a dangerous sort of portion."

"Will you see her?"

"I have no objection," said Mr Harris.

"She is now with her mother at Bristol—for," continued Mr Robinson, with some hesitation, "*she is my wife*."

Mr Harris paused, and then replied, "Well! stay with me only a few days, and then you shall fetch her. If the thing is done, it cannot be undone. She is a gentlewoman, you say, and I can have no reason to refuse seeing her."

The same letter which contained this intelligence, also requested me to prepare for my journey; and

* A friend of our family.

desired me to write to a person whom Mr Robinson named in London, and whom I had seen in his company, for a sum of money which would be necessary for our journey. This person was Mr John King,—then a money-broker in Goodman's-Fields; but I was an entire stranger to the transaction which rendered him the temporary source of my husband's finances.

One or two letters passed on this subject, and I waited anxiously for my presentation at Tregunter. At length the period of Mr Robinson's return arrived, and we set out together, while my mother remained with her friends at Bristol. Crossing the old passage to Chepstow in an open boat, a distance though not extended, extremely perilous, we found the tide so strong, and the night so boisterous, that we were apprehensive of much danger. The rain poured and the wind blew tempestuously. The boat was full of passengers, and at one end of it were placed a drove of oxen. My terror was infinite:—I considered this storm as an ill omen; but little thought that, at future periods of my life, I should have cause to regret that *I had not perished!*

During our journey Robinson entreated me to overlook anything harsh that might appear in the manners of his *uncle*; for he still denied that Mr Harris was his father. But, above all things, he conjured me to conceal my real age, and to say that I was some years older than he knew me to be. To this proposal I readily consented, and I felt myself firm in courage at the moment when we came within sight of Tregunter.

Mr Harris was then building the family mansion, and resided in a pretty little decorated cottage which was afterwards converted into domestic offices. We passed through a thick wood, the mountains at every brake meeting our eyes covered with thin clouds, and rising in a sublime altitude above the valley. A more romantic space of scenery never met the human eye! I felt my mind inspired with a pensive melancholy,

and was only awakened from my reverie by the post-boy stopping at the mansion of Tregunter.

Mr Harris came out to receive me. I wore a dark claret-coloured riding habit, with a white beaver hat and feathers. He embraced me with excessive cordiality, while Miss Robinson, my husband's sister, with cold formality led me into the house. I never shall forget her looks or her manner. Had her brother presented the most abject being to her, she could not have taken my hand with a more frigid demeanor. Miss Robinson, though not more than twenty years of age, was gothic in her appearance and stiff in her deportment; she was of low stature, and clumsy, with a countenance peculiarly formed for the expression of sarcastic vulgarity—a short snub nose, turned up at the point, a head thrown back with an air of *hauteur*; a gaudy-coloured chintz gown, a thrice-bordered cap, with a profusion of ribbons, and a countenance somewhat more ruddy than was consistent with even pure health, presented the personage whom I was to know as my future companion and kinswoman!

Mr Harris looked like a venerable *Hawthorn*; a brown fustain coat, a scarlet waistcoat edged with narrow gold, a pair of woollen spatter-dashes, and a gold laced hat, formed the dress he generally wore. He always rode a small Welch pony, and was seldom in the house except at eating-time, from sun-rise to the close of the evening.

There was yet another personage in the domestic establishment, who was by Mr Harris regarded as of no small importance: this was a venerable house-keeper of the name of Mary Edwards. Mrs Molly was the female Mentor of the family; she dined at the table with Mr Harris; she was the governess of the domestic department; and a more overbearing, vindictive spirit never inhabited the heart of mortal than that which pervaded the soul of the ill-natured Mrs Molly.

It may easily be conjectured that my time passed

heavily in this uninteresting circle. I was condemned either to drink ale with 'the 'squire,' for Mr Harris was only spoken of by that title, or to visit the methodistical seminary which lady Huntingdon had established at Trevecca, another mansion-house on the estate of Mr Harris. Miss Robinson was of this sect; and though Mr Harris was not a disciple of the Huntingdonian school, he was a constant church visitor on every Sunday. His zeal was indefatigable; and he would frequently fine the rustics, (for he was a justice of the peace, and had been sheriff of the county,) when he heard them swear, though every third sentence he uttered was attended by an oath that made his hearers shudder.

I soon became a considerable favourite of 'the 'squire,' but I did not find any yielding qualities about the hearts of Miss Betsy or Mrs Molly. They observed me with jealous eyes; they considered me as an interloper, whose manners attracted Mr Harris's esteem, and who was likely to diminish their divided influence in the family. I found them daily growing weary of my society; I perceived their side-long glances when I was complimented by the visiting neighbours on my good looks, or taste in the choice of my dresses. Miss Robinson rode on horseback in a camlet safe-guard, with a high-crowned bonnet. I wore a fashionable habit, and looked like something human. Envy at length assumed the form of insolence, and I was taunted perpetually on the folly of appearing like a woman of fortune;—that a lawyer's wife had no right to dress like a duchess; and that, though I might be very accomplished, a good housewife had no occasion for harpsichords and books; they belonged to women who brought wherewithal to support them. Such was the language of vulgar illiberal natures! yet for three weeks I endured it patiently.

Knowing that Mr Harris was disposed to think favourably of me—that he even declared he should

“ have liked me for his wife, had I not *married Tom*,” though he was then between sixty and seventy years of age, I thought it most prudent to depart, lest through the machinations of Miss Betsy and Mrs Molly I should lose the share I had gained in his affections. My mother was still at Bristol ; and the morning of our departure being arrived, to my infinite astonishment, Mr Harris proposed accompanying us thither. It was in vain that Molly and Miss interfered to prevent him ; he swore that he would see me safe across the channel, whatever might be the consequence of his journey. We set out together.

On our arrival at Bristol Mr Harris was presented to my mother, and by her introduced to many respectable friends. He was consequently invited to several dinner parties. I was his idol ; he would dance with me ; when he had taken the evening draught he would sing with me, and I was to him the most delightful of beings. Many embellishments for Tregunter-house were submitted to my taste and choice ; and I remember, on his giving orders for the marble chimney-pieces, he said, “ Choose them as you like them, Mrs Robinson, for they are all for you and Tom when I am no more.” Indeed he frequently assured me, while I was at Tregunter, that the estate should be my husband’s.

After passing many days at Bristol Mr Harris returned to Wales, and our party set out for London. Mr Robinson’s mind was easy, and his hopes were confirmed by the kindness of his uncle ; he now considered himself as the most happy of mortals. We removed from Great Queen street, to a house, No. 13 in Hatton garden, which had been recently built. Mr Robinson hired it, and furnished it with peculiar elegance. I frequently inquired into the extent of his finances, and he as often assured me that they were in every respect competent to his expenses. In addition to our domestic establishment, Mr Robinson purchased a handsome phaeton, with saddle horses for

his own use; and I now made my *début*, though scarcely emerged beyond the boundaries of childhood, in the broad hemisphere of fashionable folly.

A new face, a young person dressed with peculiar, but simple elegance, was sure to attract attention at places of public entertainment. The first time I went to Ranelagh my habit was so singularly plain and quaker-like, that all eyes were fixed upon me. I wore a gown of light brown lustring with close round cuffs (it was then the fashion to wear long ruffles); my hair was without powder, and my head adorned with a plain round cap and a white chip hat, without any ornaments whatever.

The second place of polite entertainment to which Mr Robinson accompanied me was the Pantheon concert, then the most fashionable assemblage of the gay and the distinguished. At this place it was customary to appear much dressed; large hoops and high feathers were universally worn. My habit was composed of pale pink satin, trimmed with broad sable; my dear mother presented me a suit of rich and valuable point lace, which she had received from my father, as a birth-day gift; and I was at least some hours employed in decorating my person for this new sphere of fascination: I say some hours, because my shape at that period required some arrangement, owing to the visible increase of my domestic solitudes.

As soon as I entered the Pantheon rotunda, I never shall forget the impression which my mind received: the splendour of the scene, the dome illuminated with variegated lamps, the music, and the beauty of the women, seemed to present a circle of enchantment. I recollect that the most lovely of fair forms met my eyes in that of lady Almeria Carpenter. The countenance which most pleased me was that of the late Mrs Baddeley. The first countess of Tyrconnel also appeared with considerable *éclat*. But the bunion: the room, the unceasing murmur of admiration converted the marchioness Townshend: I took in the pro-

a sofa nearly opposite to that on which she was sitting, and I observed two persons, evidently men of fashion, speaking to her ; till one of them, looking towards me, with an audible voice inquired of the other “ Who is she ? ”

Their fixed stare disconcerted me, I rose, and, leaning on my husband’s arm, again mingled in the brilliant circle. The inquiries followed us ; stopping several friends, as we walked round the circle, and repeatedly demanding of them, “ Who is that young lady in the pink dress trimmed with sable ? ”—My manner and confusion plainly evinced that I was not accustomed to the gaze of impertinent high breeding. I felt uneasy, and proposed returning home, when I perceived that our two followers were joined by a third, who, on looking at me, said, “ I think I know her,” It was the late earl of Northington.

We had now to pass the group in order to quit the rotunda. Lord Northington, leaving his companions, approached me. “ Miss Darby, or I am mistaken,” said he, with a bow of marked civility. I replied, that my name was now changed to that of Robinson : and, to prevent any awkward embarrassment, presented my husband, on whose arm I was still leaning. Lord Northington continued to walk round the Pantheon with us, made many inquiries after my father, complimented me on the improvement of my person, and “ hoped that he should be permitted to pay his respects to Mr and Mrs Robinson.”

We now entered the tea-room ; there was not a seat vacant ; I was considerably fatigued, and somewhat faint with the heat of the rotunda. I quitted the tea-room, and seated myself on a sofa near the door. In a few minutes lord Northington brought me a cup of tea, for Mr Robinson did not like to leave me alone ; and at the same time presented his two ^{were} ^{addition} ^{visitive} friends, lord Lyttelton and captain Ays-
purchased a. proposed departing. Mr Robinson accom-

panied me to the vestibule ; and while he was seeking the carriage, lord Lyttelton offered his services. I had never till that evening heard his name ; but there was an easy effrontery in his address that completely disgusted, while his determined gaze distressed and embarrassed me ; and I felt inexpressible satisfaction when Mr Robinson returned to tell me that the carriage was ready.

On the following morning lords Northington, Lyttelton, and colonel Ayscough, made their visits of ceremony. Mr Robinson was not at home, but I received them, though not without some embarrassment. I was yet a child, and wholly unacquainted with the manners of the world. Yet, young as I was, I became the traveller of its mazy and perilous paths. At an age when girls are generally at school, or indeed scarcely emancipated from the nursery, I was presented in society as a wife,—and very nearly as a mother.

Lord Lyttelton, who was perhaps the most accomplished libertine that any age or country has produced, with considerable artifice inquired after Mr Robinson, professed his earnest desire to cultivate his acquaintance, and, on the following day, sent him a card of invitation. Lyttelton was an adept in the artifices of fashionable intrigue : he plainly perceived that both Mr Robinson and myself were uninitiated in its mysteries : he knew that to undermine a wife's honour, he must become master of the husband's confidence ; and Mr Robinson was too much pleased with the society of a man whose wit was only equalled by his profligacy, to shrink from such an association.

Fortunately for me, lord Lyttelton was uniformly my aversion. His manners were overbearingly insolent, his language licentious, and his person slovenly even to a degree that was disgusting. Mr Robinson was in very respect the very reverse of his companion ; he was unassuming, neat, and delicate in his conversation. I had not a wish to descend from the pro-

priety of wedded life ; and I abhorred, decidedly abhorred, the acquaintance with lord Lyttelton.

In the course of a few days his lordship presented me the works of Miss Aikin, (now Mrs Barbauld). I read them with rapture ; I thought them the most beautiful poems I had ever seen, and considered the woman who could invent such poetry, as the most to be envied of human creatures. Lord Lyttelton had some taste for poetical compositions, and wrote verses with considerable facility.

On the following Monday I again visited the Pantheon. My dress was then white and silver. Again I was followed with attention. Lord Lyttelton was my *cavaliere servente* that evening, though, as usual, his chief attention was paid to Mr Robinson. During the concert he presented the count de Belgeioso, the imperial ambassador, one of the most accomplished foreigners I ever remember having met with. Lord Valentia was also introduced ; but as his lordship had recently made some *éclat* by his attentions to the celebrated Mrs Elliot, I rather avoided than wished to cultivate his acquaintance

Mr Robinson's intercourse with the world was now rapidly augmenting. Every day was productive of some new association. Lord Lyttelton presented many of his friends ; among others captain O'Byrne, and Mr William Brereton of Drury lane theatre. In the course of a short time we also became acquainted with sir Francis Molyneux, Mr Alderman Sayer, and the late unfortunate George Robert Fitzgerald. Lord Northington was also a constant visitor, and frequently rallied me on what he thought my striking likeness to his family.

Among my female friends, those, for whom I entertained the strongest esteem, were lady Yea, the wife of sir William Yea, and the sister of sir John Trevellyan ;—she was a lovely and accomplished woman. Mrs Parry, the wife of the reverend doctor Parry, and the author of *Eden Vale*, a novel, was

also one of my most favourite acquaintances. Mrs Parry was a woman of considerable talents, a wit, and of remarkably pleasing manners.

Of those who frequented our house lord Lyttelton was most decidedly my abhorrence ; I knew that he frequently led my husband from the paths of domestic confidence to the haunts of profligate debasement. Towards me his lordship affected great indifference ; he has even in my presence declared, that no woman under thirty years of age was worth admiring ; that even the antiquity of forty was far preferable to the insipidity of sixteen ; and he generally concluded his observations by hoping he had not made “ the *pretty child* angry.”

I soon discovered that his intercourse with lord Lyttelton produced a very considerable change in Mr Robinson’s domestic deportment. They were constantly together, and the neglect which I experienced began to alarm me. I dedicated all my leisure hours to poetry ; I wrote verses of all sorts ; and Mr Robinson having mentioned that I had proposed appearing on the stage previous to my marriage, in the character of Cordelia, lord Lyttelton facetiously christened me the Poetess Corry.

It was with extreme regret, and frequently with uncontrollable indignation, that I endured the neglect of my husband and the tauntings of the profligate Lyttelton. ‘The child,’ for so he generally called me, was deserted for the society of the most libertine men and the most abandoned women. Mr Robinson became not only careless of his wife, but of his pecuniary finances ; while I was kept in total ignorance as to the resources which supported his increasing expenses.

Among my other friends, lady Yea frequently inquired by what means my husband supported his household disbursements. Our table was elegantly, though not profusely, served. Mr Robinson seldom attended to his profession, and I was too young as

well as too inexperienced, to look after family affairs. My younger brother George, whom upon my marriage Mr Robinson and myself adopted as our own, now finding his health impaired, my mother attended him at Bristol; so that I had no friend to advise me, who felt any real interest in my welfare. Dress, parties, adulation, occupied all my hours. Mr Robinson's easy temper was influenced by the counsel of his friend Lyttelton, and he every hour sunk more deeply in the gulph of dissipation.

Among the most dangerous of my husband's associates was George Robert Fitzgerald. His manner, towards women were interesting and attentive. He perceived the neglect with which I was treated by Mr Robinson, and the pernicious influence which lord Lyttelton had acquired over his mind: he professed to feel the warmest interest in my welfare, lamented the destiny which had befallen me, in being wedded to a man incapable of estimating my value, and at last confessed *himself* my most ardent and devoted admirer. I shuddered at the declaration, for amidst all the allurements of splendid folly, my mind, the purity of my virtue, was still uncontaminated.

I repulsed the dangerous advances of this accomplished person; but I did not the less feel the humiliation to which a husband's indifference had exposed me. God can bear witness to the purity of my soul; even surrounded by temptations, and mortified by neglect. Whenever I ventured to inquire into pecuniary resources, Mr Robinson silenced me by saying that he was independent; added to this assurance, lord Lyttelton repeatedly promised that, through his courtly interest, he would very shortly obtain for my husband some honourable and lucrative situation.

I confess that I reposed but little confidence in the promises of such a man, though my husband believed them inviolable. Frequent parties were made at his lordship's house in Hill street, and many invitations pressed for a visit to his seat at Hagley. These I

peremptorily refused; till the noble hypocrite became convinced of my aversion, and adopted a new mode of pursuing his machinations.

One forenoon lord Lyttelton called in Hatton garden, as was almost his daily custom, and, on finding that Mr Robinson was not at home, requested to speak with me on business of importance. I found him seemingly much distressed. He informed me that he had a secret to communicate of considerable moment both to my interest and happiness. I started. "Nothing, I trust in heaven, has befallen my husband!" said I with a voice scarcely articulate. Lord Lyttelton hesitated. "How little does that husband deserve the solicitude of such a wife!" said he; "but," continued his lordship, "I fear that I have in some degree aided in alienating his conjugal affections. I could not bear to see such youth, such merit, so sacrificed."—"Speak briefly, my lord," said I.—"Then," replied lord Lyttelton, "I must inform you, that your husband is the most false and undeserving of that name! He has formed a connection with a woman of abandoned character; he lavishes on her those means of subsistence which you will shortly stand in need of."

"I do not believe it," said I; indignantly.—"Then you shall be convinced," answered his lordship—"but remember, if you betray me, your true and zealous friend, I must fight your husband; for he never will forgive my having discovered his infidelity." "It cannot be true," said I; "You have been misinformed."

"Then it has been by the woman who usurps your place in the affections of your husband," replied lord Lyttelton: "from her I received the information: her name is Harriet Wilmot: she resides in Soho: your husband daily visits her."—I thought I should have fainted: but a torrent of tears recalled the ebbing current of my heart, and I grew proud in fortitude, though humbled in self-love.

“ Now,” said lord Lyttelton, “ if you are a woman of spirit, you will be *revenged!*” I shrunk with horror, and would have quitted the room. “ Hear me,” said he. “ You cannot be a stranger to my motives for thus cultivating the friendship of your husband; my fortune is at your disposal. Robinson is a ruined man; his debts are considerable, and nothing but destruction can await you. Leave him! Command my powers to serve you.”

I would hear no more—broke from him, and rushed out of the apartments. My sensations, my sufferings were undescribable.

I immediately took a hackney coach, and proceeded to Princes street, Soho;—lord Lyttelton having given me the address of my rival. Language cannot describe what I suffered till I arrived at the lodgings of Miss Wilmot. The coachman knocked, a dirty servant girl opened the door. Her mistress was not at home, I quitted the coach and ascended to the drawing-room; where the servant left me, after informing me that Miss W. would return in a very short time. I was now left alone.

I opened the chamber-door which led from the drawing-room: a new white lustring sacque and petticoat lay on the bed. While I was examining the room, a loud knocking at the street door alarmed me. I re-entered the front apartment, and waited with a palpitating bosom till the being whose triumph had awakened both my pride and my resentment appeared before me.

She was a handsome woman, though evidently some years older than myself. She wore a dress of printed Irish muslin, with a black gauze cloak and a chip hat, trimmed with pale lilac ribbons; she was tall, and had a very pleasing countenance: her manner was timid and confused; her lips as pale as ashes. I commiserated her distress, desired her not to be alarmed, and we took our seats, with increased composure.

“I came to inquire whether or not you are acquainted with a Mr Robinson,” said I.

“I am,” replied Miss Wilmot. “He visits me frequently.” She drew off her glove as she spoke, and passing her hand over her eyes, I observed on her finger a ring, which I knew to have been my husband’s.

“I have nothing more to say,” added I, “but to request that you will favour me with Mr Robinson’s address; I have something which I wish to convey to him.” She smiled, and cast her eyes over my figure: my dress was a morning *dishabille* of India muslin: with a bonnet of straw, and a white lawn cloak bordered with lace.

“You are Mr Robinson’s wife,” said she with a trembling voice: “I am sure you are; and probably this ring was yours; pray receive it—”

I declined taking the ring. She continued: Had I known that Mr Robinson was the husband of such a woman —

I rose to leave her.—She added: “I never will see him more—unworthy man—I never will again receive him.” I could make no reply; but rose and departed.

On my return to Hatton garden I found my husband waiting dinner. I concealed my chagrin; we had made a party that evening to Drury lane theatre, and from thence to a select concert at the count de Belgeioso’s, in Portman square. Lord Lyttelton was to join us at both places. We went to the play; but my agitation had produced such a violent headache that I was obliged to send an apology for not keeping our engagement at the imperial ambassador’s.

On the following morning I spoke to Mr Robinson respecting Miss Wilmot. He did not deny that he knew such a person; that he had visited her; but he threw all the blame of his indiscretion on lord Lyttelton. He requested to know who had informed me of his conduct. I refused to tell; and he had too

high an opinion of his false associate to suspect him of such treachery.

At one of Mrs Parry's card parties I met Mrs Abingdon. I thought her the most lively and bewitching woman I had ever seen : her manners were fascinating, and the peculiar tastefulness of her dress excited universal admiration. My imagination again wandered to the stage, and I thought the heroine of the scenic art was of all human creatures the most to be envied.

About this period I observed that Mr Robinson had frequent visitors of the Jewish tribe ; that he was often closeted with them, and that some secret negociation was going forward to which I was a total stranger. Among others, Mr King was a constant visitor ; indeed he had often been with my husband on private business ever since the period of our marriage. I questioned Mr Robinson upon the subject of these strange and repeated interviews. He assured me that the persons I had seen came merely upon law business, and that, in his profession, it was necessary to be civil to all ranks of people. Whenever I urged a farther explanation he assumed a tone of displeasure, and requested me not to meddle with his professional occupations : I desisted ; and the parlour of our house was almost as much frequented by Jews as though it had been their synagogue.

Mr Robinson's mornings were devoted to his bearded friends ; his evenings to his fashionable associates ; but my hours were all dedicated to sorrow ; for I now heard that my husband, even at the period of his marriage, had an attachment which he had not broken ; and that his infidelities were as public as the ruin of his finances was inevitable. I remonstrated—I was almost frantic. My distress was useless, my wishes to retrench our expenses ineffectual. Mr Robinson had, *previous to our union*, deeply involved himself in a bond debt of considerable magnitude ; and he had from time to time borrowed money on

annuity—one sum to discharge the other, till every plan of liquidation appeared impracticable. During all this time my mother was at Bristol.

Lord Lyttelton, finding every plan of seduction fail, now rested his only hope of subduing my honour in the certainty of my husband's ruin. He therefore took every step, embraced every opportunity of involving him more deeply in calamity. Parties were made to Richmond and Salt-hill, to Ascot-heath and Epsom races; in all of which Mr Robinson bore his share of expense, with the addition of post-horses. Whenever he seemed to shrink from his augmenting indiscretion, lord Lyttelton assured him that, through his interest, an appointment of honourable and pecuniary importance should be obtained; though I embraced every opportunity to assure his lordship that no consideration upon earth should ever make me the victim of his artifice.

Mr Fitzgerald still paid me unremitting attention. His manners *towards women* were beautifully interesting. He frequently cautioned me against the libertine Lyttelton, and as frequently lamented the misguided confidence which Mr Robinson reposed in him:—lord Lyttelton's shameless conduct towards an amiable wife, from whom he was separated, and his cruel neglect of a lady of the name of Dawson, who had long been attached to him, marked the unworthiness of his character; he was the very last man in the world for whom I ever could have entertained the smallest partiality; he was to me the most hateful of existing beings. Probably these pages will be read, when the hand that writes them moulders in the grave; when that God who judges all hearts will know how innocent I was of the smallest conjugal infidelity. I make this solemn asseveration, because there have been malevolent spirits who, in the plentitude of their calumny, have slandered me by suspecting my fidelity even at this early period of my existence. These pages are the pages of truth, unadorned by ro-

mance, and unembellished by the graces of phraseology; and I know that I have been sufficiently the victim of events, too well, to become the tacit acquiescer where I have been grossly misrepresented. Alas! of all created beings I have been the most severely subjugated by circumstances more than by inclination.

About this time a party was one evening made to Vauxhall. Mr Fitzgerald was the person who proposed it, and it consisted of six or eight persons; the night was warm and the gardens crowded; we supped in the circle which has the statue of Handel in its centre. The hour growing late or rather early in the morning, our company dispersed, and no one remained excepting Mr Robinson, Mr Fitzgerald, and myself; suddenly a noise was heard near the orchestra; a crowd had assembled, and two gentlemen were quarrelling furiously. Mr R. and Fitzgerald ran out of the box. I rose to follow them, but they were lost in the throng, and I thought it most prudent to resume my place, which I had just quitted, as the only certain way of their finding me in safety. In a moment Fitzgerald returned. "Robinson," said he, "is gone to seek you at the entrance-door; he thought you had quitted the box." "I did for a moment," said I, "but I was fearful of losing him in the crowd, and therefore returned."

"Let me conduct you to the door; we shall certainly find him there," replied Mr Fitzgerald: "I know that he will be uneasy."—I took his arm, and we ran hastily towards the entrance door on the Vauxhall road.

Mr Robinson was not there; we proceeded to look for our carriage; it stood at some distance. I was alarmed and bewildered. Mr Fitzgerald hurried me along.—"Don't be uneasy, we shall certainly find him," said he, "for I left him here not five minutes ago." As he spoke he stopped abruptly: a servant opened a chaise door, there were four horses harnessed to it; and, by the light of the lamps on the

side of the foot path, I plainly perceived a pistol in the pocket of the door which was open. I drew back. Mr Fitzgerald placed his arm round my waist, and endeavoured to lift me up the step of the chaise; the servant watching at a little distance. I resisted, and inquired what he meant by such conduct; his hand trembled excessively, while he said in a low voice: "Robinson can but fight me." I was terrified beyond all description:—I made him loose his hold, and ran towards the entrance door. Mr Fitzgerald now perceived Mr Robinson. "Here he comes!" exclaimed he with an easy *nonchalance*, "we had found the wrong carriage, Mr Robinson, we have been looking after you, and Mrs Robinson is alarmed beyond expression."—

"I am indeed!" said I. Mr Robinson now took my hand. We stepped into the coach, and Mr Fitzgerald followed. As we proceeded towards Hatton garden, the sky incessantly flashed lightning. I was terrified by the combination of events, and I was in a situation which rendered any alarm peculiarly dangerous, for I was several months advanced in that state, which afterwards terminated by presenting to me my only child, my *darling* Maria.

I had often heard of Mr Fitzgerald's propensity to duelling—I recollected my own delicate situation—I valued my husband's safety. I therefore did not mention the adventure of the evening, particularly as Mr Fitzgerald observed in our way to Hatton garden that he had "nearly made a strange mistake, and taken possession of another person's carriage." This remark appeared so plausible that nothing farther was said upon the subject.

From that evening I was particularly cautious in avoiding Fitzgerald. He was too daring, and too fascinating a being to be allowed the smallest marks of confidence. Whenever he called I was denied to him: and, at length perceiving the impracticability

of his plan, he desisted, and seldom called excepting to leave his name, as a visitor of ceremony.

I do not recount these events, these plans for my enthrallment, with a view to convey anything like personal vanity; for I can with truth affirm that I never thought myself entitled to admiration that could endanger my security, or tempt the libertine to undermine my husband's honour. But I attribute the snares that were laid for me to three causes. The first, my youth and inexperience, my girlish appearance and simplicity of manners. Secondly, the expensive style in which Mr Robinson lived, though he was not known as a man of independent fortune; and, thirdly, the evident neglect which I experienced from my husband, whom lord Lyttelton's society had marked as a man of universal gallantry.

I was now known, by name, at every public place in and near the metropolis; our circle of acquaintances enlarged daily; my friend lady Yea was my constant companion. Mr Robinson became desperate, from a thorough conviction that no effort of economy, or professional labour, could arrange his shattered finances: the large debt which he owed *previous to his marriage with me*, having laid the foundation of every succeeding embarrassment.

The moment now approached when the arcanum was to be developed, and an execution on Mr Robinson's effects, at the suit of an annuitant, decided the doubts and fears which had long afflicted me. I was in a great degree prepared for this event, by the evident inquietude of my husband's mind, and his frequent interviews with persons of a mysterious description. Indeed this crisis seemed rather consolatory than appalling; for I hoped and trusted that the time was now arrived, when reason would take place of folly, and experience point out those thorns which strewed the pleasurable paths of dissipation.

At this period, had Mr Harris generously assisted

his son, *I am fully and confidently persuaded that he would have pursued a discreet and regular line of conduct.* His first involvement was the basis of all his misfortunes : the impossibility of liquidating that debt, (the motive for which it was contracted is to this hour unknown to me,) rendered him desperate. Indeed how could a young man, well educated,* subsist in such a metropolis without some provision? Mr Harris was a man of fortune, and he ought to have known that necessity is the most dangerous associate of youth ; that folly may be reclaimed by kindness ; but seldom fails to be darkened into vice by the severity of un pitying natures.

From Hatton garden we removed to a house, which was lent to us by a friend at Finchley. Here I hoped at least to remain tranquil till the perilous moment was passed which was to render me a mother. I here devoted my time to making my infant's little wardrobe : my finest muslin dresses I converted into frocks and robes ; with my lace I fondly trimmed them. It was a sweetly pleasing task, and I often smiled when I reflected that, only three years before this period, I had dressed a waxen doll, nearly as large as a new born infant.

Mr Robinson had much business to transact in London, and I was almost perpetually alone at Finchley. Of our domestic establishment there was only one who did not desert us, and he was a Negro !—one of that despised, degraded race, who wear the colour on their features which too often characterises the hearts of their fair and unfeeling oppressors. I have found, during my journey through life, that the two male domestics who were most attached to my interest, and most faithful to my fortunes, were both *Negros* !

My mother now returned from Bristol, and I had the consolation of her society. I divided my time

* Mr Robinson was educated at Harrow, and was a contemporary of Mr Sheridan.

betwixt reading, writing, and making a little wardrobe for my expected darling. I little regretted the busy scenes of life ; I sighed not for public attention. I felt by this change of situation as though a weighty load were taken from my heart, and solaced my mind in the idea that the worst had happened, which could befall us. Gracious heaven ! How should I have shuddered, had I then contemplated the dark perspective of my destiny !

Mr Robinson went almost daily to London, and sometimes my brother George, who was still a boy, accompanied him upon a little poney.—One day, after returning from one of their rides, my brother informed me that he had been with Mr Robinson to Marylebone ; and that he had waited and held Mr Robinson's horse, while he made a morning visit. I had then no acquaintance that resided at Marylebone ; I questioned my brother as to the place, and he persisted in his original story. " But," added he, " if you say anything about it to Mr Robinson I never will tell you where we go in future." I promised not to mention what he had said, and my mind was deeply engaged in a variety of conjectures.

A few days after Mr Robinson made another visit, and my brother was introduced to the lady.* From the manner and conversation of both parties, even a youth scarcely in his teens could draw conclusions of no favourable nature. By the side of the chimney hung my watch, which I had supposed lost in the general wreck of our property. It was enamelled with musical trophies, and very remarkable for a steel chain of singular beauty. The moment my brother described it, my suspicions were confirmed ; and Mr Robinson did not even attempt to deny his infidelity.

Mr Robinson, finding his creditors inexorable, and fearing that he might endanger his personal liberty by remaining near London, informed me that I must,

* This lady's name was Pye.

in a few days, accompany him to Tregunter. I felt a severe pang in the idea of quitting my adored mother at a moment when I should stand so much in need of a parent's attentions: my agony was extreme. I fancied that I never should behold her more; that the harshness and humiliating taunts of my husband's kindred would send me prematurely to the grave; that my infant would be left among strangers, and that my mother would scarcely have fortitude sufficient to survive me. Then I anticipated the inconvenience of so long a journey, for Tregunter house was within a few miles of Brecon. I dreaded to encounter the scornful vulgarity and the keen glances of Miss Betsy and Mrs Molly. I considered all these things with horror; but the propriety of wedded life commanded the sacrifice, and I readily consented to make it.

With tender regret, with agonizing presentiments, I took leave of my mother and my brother. Such a parting would but mock the powers of language! My delicate situation, my youth, my affection for my best of mothers, all conspired to augment my sorrow:—but a husband's repose, a husband's *liberty*, were at stake; and, my CREATOR can bear witness that, had I been blessed with that fidelity and affection which I deserved, my heart was disposed to the observance of every duty, every claim which would have embellished domestic propriety.

We set out for Tregunter. On our arrival there, I instantly perceived that our misfortunes had outstripped our speed. Miss Robinson scarcely bade us welcome; and Molly was peevish, even to insulting displeasure.

Mr Harris was from home when we arrived. But he returned shortly after. His greeting was harsh and unfeeling. "Well! So you have escaped from a prison, and now you are come here to do penance for your follies? Well! and what do you want?" I could not reply. I entered the house, and instantly

hastened to my old chamber, where my tears gave relief to that heart which was almost bursting with agony.

Still Mr Robinson conjured me to bear his *uncle's* wayward temper patiently. I did; though every day I was taunted with idle and inhuman questions: such as, "How long do you think that I will support you? What is to become of you in a prison? What business have beggars to marry?" With many others, equally feeling and high-minded!

The mansion of Tregunter presented but few sources of amusement for the female mind. Mr Harris had acquired a considerable fortune in trade, and however the art of accumulating wealth had been successfully practised, the finer pursuits of mental powers had been totally neglected. Books were unknown at Tregunter, excepting a few magazines or periodical publications, which at different periods Miss Robinson borrowed from her juvenile neighbours. There was however an old spinnet in one of the parlours. Music had been one of my early delights, and I sometimes vainly endeavoured to draw a kind of jingling harmony from this time-shaken and neglected instrument. These attempts however frequently subjected me to insult. "I had better think of getting my bread; women of no fortune had no right to follow the pursuits of fine ladies. Tom had better married a good tradesman's daughter than the child of a ruined merchant who was not capable of earning a living." Such were the remarks of my amiable and enlightened father-in-law!

One day, I particularly remember, Mr Harris had invited a large party to dinner. John and Charles Morgan, esqrs. members of parliament, with an old clergyman of the name of Jones, and several others were present. I was then within a fortnight of my perilous moment. One of the company expressed his satisfaction that I was come to give Tregunter a little stranger; and turning to Mr Harris, added,

“ you have just finished your house, in time for a nursery.”

“ No, no,” replied Mr Harris, laughing, “ they came here because *prison doors* were open to receive them.” I felt my face redden to scarlet: every person present seemed to sympathize in my chagrin, and I was near sinking under the table with confusion. Mr Robinson’s indignation was evident; but it was restrained by duty as well as by necessity.

The manor-house was not yet finished; and a few days after our arrival Mr Harris informed me that he had no accommodations for my approaching confinement. Where was I to go? was the next question. After many family consultations, it was decided that I should remove to Trevecca-house, about a mile and a half distant, and there give to this miserable world my first-born darling.

I removed to Trevecca; it was a spacious mansion at the foot of a stupendous mountain, which, from its form, was called the sugar-loaf. A part of the building was converted into a flannel manufactory, and the inhabitants were of the Huntingdonian school. Here I enjoyed the sweet repose of solitude: here I wandered about woods entangled by the wild luxuriance of nature, or roved upon the mountain’s side, while the blue vapours floated round its summit. O, God of Nature! Sovereign of the universe of wonders! in those interesting moments how fervently did I adore thee!

How often have I sat at my little parlour window and watched the pale moonbeams darting amidst the sombre and venerable yew trees that shed their solemn shade over the little garden. How often have I strolled down the woody paths, spangled with the dew of morning, and shaken off the briery branches that hung about me. How tranquil did I feel escaped from kindred tyranny, and how little did I regret the busy scenes of fashionable folly. Unquestionably the Creator formed me with a strong propensity to adore

the sublime and beautiful of his works! But it has never been my lot to meet with an associating mind, a congenial spirit, who could (as it were abstracted from the world,) find an universe in the sacred intercourse of soul, the sublime union of sensibility.

At Trevecca-house I was tranquil, if not perfectly happy. I there avoided the low taunts of uncultivated natures, the insolent vulgarity of pride, and the overbearing triumphs of a family, *whose loftiest branch* was as inferior to *my stock* as the *small weed* is beneath the *tallest tree* that overshades it. I had formed a union with a family who had neither sentiment nor sensibility: I was doomed to bear the society of ignorance and pride: I was treated as though I had been the most abject of beings, even at a time when my conscious spirit soared as far above their powers to wound it, as the mountain towered over the white battlements of my then solitary habitation.

After my removal to Trevecca I seldom saw Miss Robinson or Mrs Molly; Mr Harris never called on me; though I was not more than a mile and a half from Tregunter. At length the expected, though, to me, most perilous moment arrived, which awoke a new and tender interest in my bosom, which presented to my fondly beating heart my child,—my Maria. I cannot describe the sensations of my soul at the moment when I pressed the little darling to my bosom, my maternal bosom; when I kissed its hands, its cheeks, its forehead, as it nestled closely to my heart, and seemed to claim that affection which has never failed to warm it. She was the most beautiful of infants! I thought myself the happiest of mothers: her first smile appeared like something celestial,—something ordained to irradiate my dark and dreary prospect of existence.

Two days after my child was presented to this world of sorrow, my nurse, Mrs Jones, a most excellent woman, was earnestly desired by the people

of the manufactory to bring the infant among them : they wished to see the “ young ’squire’s baby, the little *heiress* to Tregunter.” It was in vain that I dreaded the consequences of the visit, for it was in the month of October ; but Mrs Jones assured me that infants in that part of the world were very frequently carried into the open air on the day of their birth : she also hinted that my refusal would hurt the feelings of the honest people, and wear the semblance of pride more than of maternal tenderness. This idea decided my acquiescence ; and my little darling, enveloped in the manufacture of her own romantic birth-place, made her first visit to her kind but unsophisticated countrywomen.

No sooner did Mrs Jones enter the circle than she was surrounded by the gazing throng. The infant was dressed with peculiar neatness, and nothing mortal could appear more lovely. A thousand and a thousand blessings were heaped upon the “ *heiress* of Tregunter,” for so they *fancifully* called her : a thousand times did they declare that the baby was the very image of her father. Mrs Jones returned to me : every word she uttered soothed my heart : a sweet and grateful glow, for the first time, bespoke the indescribable gratification which a fond parent feels in hearing the praises of a beloved offspring. Yet this little absence appeared an age ; a variety of fears presented dangers in a variety of shapes, and the object of all my care, of all my affection, was now pressed closer to my heart than ever.

Amidst these sweet and never-to-be-forgotten sensations, Mr Harris entered my chamber. He abruptly inquired how I found myself ; and, seating himself by the side of my bed, began to converse on family affairs. I was too feeble to say much ; and he had not the delicacy to consider that Mrs Jones, my nurse, and almost a stranger to me, was a witness to our conversation.

“ Well ! ” said Mr Harris, “ and what do you mean to do with your child ? ”

I made no answer.

“ I will tell you,” added he : “ Tie it to your back and work for it.”

I shivered with horror.

“ Prison doors are open,” continued Mr Harris. “ Tom will die in a gaol ; and what is to become of you.”

I remained silent.

Miss Robinson now made her visit. She looked at me without uttering a syllable ; but while she contemplated my infant’s features, her innocent sleeping face, her little dimpled hands folded on her breast, she murmured, “ Poor little wretch ! Poor thing ! It would be a mercy if it pleased God to take it ! ” My agony of mind was scarcely supportable.—

About three weeks after this period letters arrived, informing Mr Robinson that his creditors were still inexorable, and that the place of his concealment was known. He was cautioned not to run the hazard of an arrest ; indeed he knew that such an event would complete his ruin with Mr Harris, from whom he should not receive any assistance. He communicated this intelligence to me, and at the same time informed me that he must absolutely depart from Trevecca immediately. I was still extremely feeble, for my mental sufferings had impaired my corporeal strength almost as much as the perils I had recently encountered. But the idea of remaining at Trevecca without my husband was more terrible than the prospect of annihilation, and I replied without a hesitating thought, “ I am ready to go with you.”

My good nurse, who was a very amiable woman, and under forty years of age, conjured me to delay my journey. She informed me, that it would be dangerous to undertake it in my then weak state. My husband’s liberty was in danger, and my life

appeared of little importance ; for even at that early period of my days I was already weary of existence.

On the succeeding morning we departed. Mrs Jones insisted on accompanying me on the first day's journey. Mr Robinson, my nurse, and myself, occupied a post-chaise ; my Maria was placed on a pillow on Mrs Jones's lap. The paleness of death overspread my countenance, and the poor honest people of the mountains and the villages saw us depart with sorrow, though not without their blessings. Neither Mr Harris nor the *enlightened females* of Tregunter expressed the smallest regret, or solicitude on the occasion. We reached Abergavenny that evening. My little remaining strength was exhausted, and I could proceed no further. However singular these persecutions may appear, Mr Robinson knows that they are not in the smallest degree exaggerated.—

At Abergavenny I parted from Mrs Jones ; and, having no domestic with me, was left to take the intire charge of Maria. Reared in the tender lap of affluence, I had learnt but little of domestic occupations : the adorning part of education had been lavished, but the useful had never been bestowed upon a girl who was considered as born to independence. With these disadvantages I felt very awkwardly situated, under the arduous task I had to perform ; but necessity soon prevailed with the soft voice of maternal affection, and I obeyed her dictates as the dictates of nature.

Mrs Jones, whose excellent heart sympathized in all I suffered, would not have parted from me in so delicate a moment ; but she was the widow of a tradesman at Brecon, and having quitted her home where she had left two daughters (very pretty young women,*) to attend me, she was under the necessity of returning to them. With repeated good wishes,

* One of them married Mr Bence, a hoopmaker, near Somerset house in the Strand.

and some tears of regret flowing from her feeling and gentle heart, we parted.

On the following day we proceeded to Monmouth. Some relations of my mother residing there, particularly my grandmother; I wished to remain there till my strength was somewhat restored. We were received with genuine affection; we were caressed with unfeigned hospitality. The good and venerable object of my visit was delighted to embrace her *great grandchild*, and the family fire-side was frequently a scene of calm and pleasing conversation. How different were these moments from those which I had passed with the low-minded inhabitants of Tregunter!

My grandmother, though then near seventy years of age, was still a pleasing woman; she had in her youth been delicately beautiful: and the neat simplicity of her dress, which was always either brown or black silk, the piety of her mind, and the mildness of her nature, combined to render her a most endearing object.

As soon as my strength recovered, I was invited to partake of many pleasant entertainments. But the most favourite amusement I selected, was that of wandering by the river Wye, or of exploring the antique remains of Monmouth castle, a part of which reached the garden of my grandmother's habitation. I also constantly accompanied my amiable and venerable relative to church; and I have often observed, with a mixture of delight, and *almost* of envy, the tranquil resignation which religion diffused over her mind, even at the very close of human existence. This excellent woman expired of a gradual decay in the year 1780.

We had resided at Monmouth about a month, when I was invited to a ball. My spirits and strength had been renovated by the change of scenery, and I was persuaded to dance. I was at that time particularly fond of the amusement, and my partial friends

flattered me by saying, that I measured the mazy figure like a sylph. I was at that period a nurse; and, during the evening, Maria was brought to an anti-chamber to receive the only support she had ever yet taken. Unconscious of the danger attendant on such an event, I gave her her accustomed nourishment immediately after dancing. It was agitated by the violence of exercise and the heat of the ball-room, and, on my return home, I found my infant in strong convulsions.

My distraction, my despair, was terrible; my state of mind rendered it impossible for me to afford any internal nourishment to the child, even when her little mouth was parched, or the fit in the smallest degree abated: I was little less than frantic: all the night I sat with her on my arms: an eminent medical man attended,—the convulsions continued, and my situation was terrible: those who witnessed it cautiously avoided informing me that the peril of my infant proceeded from my dancing: had I known it at that period I really believe I should have lost my senses.

In this desperate state, with only short intervals of rest, my darling continued till the morning: all my friends came to make inquiries; and, among others, a clergyman who visited at my grandmother's. He saw the child, as it was thought, expiring; he saw me still sitting where I had taken my place of despair on the preceding night, fixed in the stupor of unutterable affliction. He conjured me to let the child be removed; I was in a raging fever; the effects of not having nourished my child during twelve hours began to endanger my own existence, and I looked forward to my dissolution as the happiest event that could befall me.

Still Maria lay upon my lap; and still I resisted every attempt that was made to remove her. Just at this period the clergyman recollected that he had seen one of his children relieved from convulsions by a simple experiment, and he requested my permission

to try its effects. The child was given over by my medical attendant, and I replied, "However desperate the remedy, I conjure you to administer it."

He now mixed a table spoon-full of spirit of aniseed, with a small quantity of spermaceti, and gave it to my infant. In a few minutes the convulsive spasms abated; and in less than an hour she sunk into a sweet and tranquil slumber. What I felt may be pictured to a fond *mother's* fancy, but my pen would fail in attempting to describe it.

Some circumstances now occurred which gave Mr Robinson reason to believe that he was not safe at Monmouth, and we prepared for a removal to some other quarter. The day was fixed for commencing our journey, when an execution arrived for a considerable sum, and Mr Robinson was no longer at liberty to travel. My alarm was infinite; the sum was too large for the possibility of liquidation, and, knowing Mr Robinson's desperate fortune, I thought it unjust as well as ungenerous to attempt the borrowing of it. Fortunately the sheriff for the county was a friend of the family. He was a gentlemanly and amiable man, and offered (to avoid any unpleasant dilemma,) to accompany us to London. We set out the same evening, and never slept till we arrived in the metropolis.

I immediately hastened to my mother, who resided in Buckingham street, York buildings, now the Adelphi. Her joy was boundless; she kissed me a thousand times; she kissed my beautiful infant; while Mr Robinson employed the day in accommodating the business which had brought him to London. He had been arrested by a friend, with a hope that so near a father's habitation, such a sum would have been paid; at least such is the reason since assigned for such unfriendly conduct!*

* This gentleman's name is Hanway, the person mentioned in the former part of this work, as Mr Robinson's earliest friend!

The matter was however arranged on an explanation taking place, and Mr Robinson engaged a lodging near Berners street, whither we repaired on the same evening. My little collection of poems, which I had arranged for publication, and which had been ready ever since my marriage, I now determined to print immediately. They were indeed trifles, very trifles—I since perused them with a blush of self-reproof, and wondered how I could venture on presenting them to the public. I trust that there is not a copy remaining, excepting that which my dear partial mother fondly preserved, and which is now in my possession.

I had been in town a few days, when some female friends persuaded me to accompany a party which they had formed to Ranelagh. Mr Robinson declined going, but after much entreaty, I consented. I had now been married near two years; my person was considerably improved; I was grown taller than when I became Mr Robinson's wife, and I had now more the manners of a woman of the world than those of girlish simplicity, which had hitherto characterized me, though I had been some months absent from London, and a part of them rusticated among mountains. The dress which I wore was plain and simple: it was composed of pale lilac lustring. My head had a wreath of white flowers; I was complimented on my looks by the whole party, and with little relish for public amusements, and a heart throbbing with domestic solicitude, I accompanied the party to Ranelagh.

The first person I saw on entering the rotunda was George Robert Fitzgerald: he started as if he had received a shock of electricity. I turned my head away, and would have avoided him; but he instantly quitted two friends with whom he was walking, and presented himself to me. He expressed great pleasure at seeing me once more in "the world;" was surprised at finding me for the *first time* in public

without my husband, and requested permission to pay his respects to me at my house. I replied that I was "on a visit to some friends." He bowed, and rejoined his companions.

During the evening, however, he never ceased to follow me. We quitted the rotunda early; and, as we were waiting for the carriage, I again observed Fitzgerald in the antichamber. We passed the vestibule, and at the door his own carriage was waiting.

On the following noon I was correcting a proof sheet of my volume, when the servant abruptly announced Mr Fitzgerald!

I was somewhat disconcerted by this unexpected visit, and received Mr Fitzgerald with a cold and embarrassed mien, which evidently mortified him; I also felt a little worldly vanity in the moment of surprise, for my morning dress was more calculated to display maternal assiduity than elegant and tasteful dishabille. In a small basket near my chair slept my little Maria; my table was spread with papers; and everything around me presented the mixed confusion of a study and a nursery.

From the period of Mrs Jones's quitting me at Abergavenny, I had made it an invariable rule always to dress and undress my infant. I never suffered it to be placed in a cradle, or to be fed out of my presence. A basket of an oblong shape with four handles (with a pillow and a small bolster) was her bed by day: at night she slept with me. I had too often heard of the neglect which servants show to young children, and I resolved never to expose an infant of mine either to their ignorance or inattention. It was amidst the duties of a parent, that the gay, the high-fashioned Fitzgerald now found me; and whenever either business or, very rarely, public amusements drew me from the occupation, my mother never failed to be my substitute.

Mr Fitzgerald said a thousand civil things; but that which charmed me, was the admiration of my

child. He declared that he had never seen so young a mother, or so beautiful an infant. For the first remark I sighed; but the last delighted my bosom: she indeed was one of the prettiest little mortals that ever the sun shone upon.

The next subject of praise was my poetry. I smile while I recollect how far the effrontery of flattery has power to belie the judgment. Mr Fitzgerald took up the proof sheet and read one of the pastorals. I inquired by what means he had discovered my place of residence; he informed me, that his carriage had followed me home on the preceding night. He now took his leave.

On the following evening he made us another visit;

I say us, because Mr Robinson was at home. Mr Fitzgerald drank tea with us, and proposed making a party on the next day to dine at Richmond. To this I gave a decided negative; alleging that my duty towards my child prevented the possibility of passing a day absent from her.

On the Wednesday following Mr Robinson accompanied me again to Ranelagh; there we met lord Northington, lord Lyttelton, captain O'Bryan, captain Ayscough, Mr Andrews and several others, who all, in the course of the evening, evinced their attentions: but as Mr Robinson's deranged state of affairs did not admit of our receiving parties at home, I made my excuses, by saying, that we were at a friend's house, and not yet established in a town residence. Lord Lyttelton was particularly importunate; but he received the same answer which I had given to every other inquirer.

A short time after Mr Robinson was arrested. Now came my hour of trial. He was conveyed to the house of a sheriff's officer, and in a few days, detainers were lodged against him to the amount of twelve hundred pounds, chiefly the arrears of annuities, and other demands from Jew creditors; for I can proudly and with truth declare, that he did not at

that time, or at any period since, owe fifty pounds for me, or to any tradesmen on my account, whatever.

Mr Robinson knew that it would be useless to ask Mr Harris's assistance: indeed his mind was too much depressed to make an exertion for the arrangement of his affairs. He was, therefore, after waiting three weeks in the custody of a sheriff's officer, (during which time I never left him for a single hour, day or night) obliged to submit to the necessity of becoming a captive.

For myself I cared but little; all my anxiety was for Mr Robinson's repose, and the health of my child. The apartment which we obtained was in the upper part of the building, overlooking a racket-ground. Mr Robinson was expert in all exercises of strength or activity, and he found that amusement daily which I could not partake of. I had other occupations of a more interesting nature, the care of a beloved and still helpless daughter.

During nine months and three weeks never once did I pass the threshold of our dreary habitation; though every allurement was offered, every effort was made, to draw me from my scene of domestic attachment. Numberless messages and letters from lords Northington and Lyttelton, from Mr Fitzgerald, and many others, were conveyed to me. But they all, excepting lord Northington's, were dictated in the language of gallantry, were replete with profusions of *love*, and wishes to release me from my unpleasant and humiliating situation—and were therefore treated with contempt, scorn, and indignation. For God can bear witness that, at that period, my mind had never entertained a thought of violating those vows which I had made to my husband at the altar.

What I suffered during this tedious captivity!—My little volume of poems sold but indifferently: my health was considerably impaired; and the trifling income which Mr Robinson received from his father was scarcely sufficient to support him. I will not

enter into a tedious detail of vulgar sorrows, of vulgar scenes ; I seldom quitted my apartment, and never till the evening, when for air and exercise I walked on the racket-ground with my husband.

It was during one of these night walks that my little daughter first blessed my ears with the articulation of words. The circumstance made a forcible and indelible impression on my mind. It was a clear moonlight evening ; the infant was in the arms of her nursery maid ; she was dancing her up and down, and was playing with her ; her eyes were fixed upon the moon, to which she pointed with her small forefinger ;—on a sudden a cloud passed over it, and the child, with a slow falling of her hand, articulately sighed, “*all gone !*” This had been a customary expression with her maid, whenever the infant wanted anything which it was deemed prudent to withhold or to hide from her. These little nothings will appear insignificant to the common reader ; but to the parent whose heart is ennobled by sensibility, they will become matters of important interest. I can only add, that I walked till near midnight, watching every cloud that passed over the moon, and as often, with a rapturous sensation, hearing my little prattler repeat her observation.

Having much leisure and many melancholy hours, I again turned my thoughts towards the muses. I chose *Captivity* for the subject of my pen, and soon composed a quarto poem of some length ; it was superior to my former productions ; but it was full of defects, replete with weak or laboured lines. I never now read my early compositions without a suffusion on my cheek, which marks my humble opinion of them.

At this period I was informed that the duchess of Devonshire was the admirer and patroness of literature : with a mixture of timidity and hope I sent her grace a neatly bound volume of my poems, accompanied by a short letter apologizing for their defects,

and pleading my age as the only excuse for their inaccuracy. My brother, who was a charming youth, was the bearer of my first literary offering at the shrine of nobility. The duchess admitted him; and with the most generous and amiable sensibility inquired some particulars respecting my situation, with a request that on the following day I would make her a visit.—

I knew not what to do. Her liberality claimed my compliance; yet, as I had never, during my husband's long captivity, quitted him for half an hour, I felt a sort of reluctance that pained the romantic firmness of my mind, while I meditated what I considered as a breach of my domestic attachment. However, at the particular and earnest request of Mr Robinson, I consented; and accordingly accepted the duchess's invitation.

During my seclusion from the world I had adapted my dress to my situation. Neatness was at all times my pride; but now plainness was the conformity to necessity: simple habiliments became the abode of adversity; and the plain brown satin gown, which I wore on my first visit to the duchess of Devonshire, appeared to me as strange as a birth-day court-suit to a newly-married citizen's daughter.

To describe the duchess's look and manner when she entered the back drawing-room of Devonshire house, would be impracticable; mildness and sensibility beamed in her eyes and irradiated her countenance. She expressed her surprise at seeing so young a person, who had already experienced such vicissitude of fortune; she lamented that my destiny was so little proportioned to what she was pleased to term my desert, and with a tear of gentle sympathy requested that I would accept a proof of her good wishes. I had not words to express my feelings, and was departing, when the duchess requested me to call on her very often, and to bring my little daughter with me.

I made frequent visits to the amiable duchess, and was at all times received with the warmest proofs of

friendship. My little girl, to whom I was still a nurse, generally accompanied me, and always experienced the kindest caresses from my admired patroness, my liberal and affectionate friend. Frequently the duchess inquired most minutely into the story of my sorrows, and as often gave me tears of the most spontaneous sympathy. But such was my destiny, that while I cultivated the esteem of this best of women, by a conduct which was above the reach of reprobation, my husband, even though I was the partner of his captivity, the devoted slave to his necessities, indulged in the lowest and most degrading intrigues; frequently, during my short absence with the duchess, for I never quitted the prison but to obey her summons, he was known to admit the most abandoned of their sex; women whose low licentious lives were such as to render them the shame and outcasts of society. These disgraceful meetings were arranged, even while I was in my own apartment, in a next room, and by the assistance of an Italian who was also there a captive. I was apprised of the proceeding, and I questioned Mr Robinson upon the subject. He denied the charge; but I availed myself of an opportunity that offered, and was convinced that my husband's infidelities were both frequent and disgraceful.

Still I pursued my plan of the most rigid domestic propriety; still I preserved my faith inviolate, my name unsullied. At times I endured the most poignant sufferings; from the pain of disappointed hope, and the pressure of pecuniary distresses.

During my long seclusion from society, for I could not associate with those whom destiny had placed in a similar predicament, not one of my female friends even inquired what was become of me. Those who had been protected and received with the most cordial hospitality by me, in my more happy hours, now neglected all the kind condolence of sympathetic feeling, and shunned both me and my dreary habitation

From that hour I have never felt the affection for my own sex which perhaps some women feel ; I have never taught my heart to cherish their friendship, or to depend on their attentions beyond the short perspective of a prosperous day. Indeed I have almost uniformly found my own sex my most inveterate enemies ; I have experienced little kindness from them ; though my bosom has often ached with the pang inflicted by their envy, slander, and malevolence.

The Italian whom I took occasion to mention as the *Cicerone* of my husband's gallantries, was named Albanesi. He was the husband to a beautiful Roman woman of that name, who had some years before attracted considerable attention in the hemisphere of gallantry, where she had shone as a brilliant constellation. She had formerly been the mistress of a prince de Courland, and afterwards of the count de Belgeioso, the Imperial ambassador : but at the period in which I first saw her, she was, I believe, devoted to a life of unrestrained impropriety. She frequently came to visit her husband, who had held a situation in the opera-house during the management of Mr Hobart, now earl of Buckinghamshire. I remember she was one of the handsomest women I had ever seen, and that her dress was the most extravagantly splendid. Satins, richly embroidered, or trimmed with point lace, were her daily habiliments ; and her personal attractions were considerably augmented by the peculiar dignity and grace with which she walked : in a few words, this woman was a striking sample of beauty and of profligacy.

Whenever she came to visit her *sposo*, she never failed to obtrude herself on my seclusion. Mr Robinson rather encouraged than shunned her visits, and I was obliged to receive the beautiful Angelina, (for such was her Christian name), however repugnant such an associate was to my feelings. At every interview she took occasion to ridicule my romantic domestic attachment ; laughed at my folly in wasting

my youth (for I was not then eighteen years of age) in such a disgraceful obscurity; and pictured, in all the glow of fanciful scenery, the splendid life into which I might enter, if I would but know my own power, and break the fetters of matrimonial restriction. She once told me that she had mentioned to the earl of Pembroke, that there was a young married lady in the most humiliating captivity with her husband; she said that she had described my person, and that lord Pembroke was ready to offer me his services.

This proposal fully proclaimed the meaning of signora Albanesi's visits; and I resolved in future to avoid all conversation with her. She was at that time between thirty and forty years of age, and her day of splendour was hourly sinking to the obscurity of neglect: she was nevertheless still reluctant to resign the dazzling meteors which fashion had scattered in her way; and having sacrificed every personal feeling for the gratification of her vanity, she now sought to build a gaudy transient fabric on the destruction of another. In addition to her persuasions, her husband, Angelo Albanesi, constantly made the world of gallantry the subject of his conversation. Whole evenings has he sitten in our apartment telling long stories of intrigue; praising the liberality of one nobleman, the romantic chivalry of another, the sacrifice which a third had made to an adored object, and the splendid income which a fourth would bestow on any young lady of education and mental endowments, who would accept his protection, and be the partner of his fortune. I always smiled at Albanesi's inuendos; and I still found some amusement in his society when he thought fit to divest his conversation of his favourite topic. This Italian, though neither young nor even tolerably well-looking, was uncommonly entertaining; he could sing, likewise imitate various musical instruments, was an excellent buffoon, and a very neat engraver: some of his plates were

executed under the inspection of Sherwin, and he was considered as a very promising artist.

Were I to describe one half of what I suffered during fifteen months captivity, the world would consider it as the invention of a novel. But Mr Robinson knows what I endured, and how patiently, how correctly I suited my mind to the strict propriety of wedded life: he knows that my duty as a wife was exemplary, my chastity inviolate; he knows that neither poverty nor obscurity, neither the tauntings of the world nor his neglect, could tempt me even to the smallest error: he knows that I bore my afflicting humiliations with a cheerful uncomplaining spirit; that I toiled honourably for his comfort; and that my attentions were exclusively dedicated to him and to my infant.

The period now arrived when Mr Robinson, by setting aside some debts, and by giving fresh bonds and fresh securities for others, once more obtained his liberty. I immediately conveyed the intelligence to my lovely duchess of Devonshire, and she wrote me a letter of kind congratulation: she was then at Chatsworth.

The first moments of emancipation were delightful to the senses. I felt as though I had been newly born; I longed to see all my old and intimate associates, and almost forgot that they had so unworthily neglected me. Everything that had passed now appeared like a melancholy vision. The gloom had dissolved, and a new perspective seemed to brighten before me.

The first place of public entertainment I went to, was Vauxhall. I had frequently found occasion to observe a mournful contrast when I had quitted the elegant apartinent of Devonshire house to enter the dark galleries of a prison; but the sensation which I felt on hearing the music and beholding the gay throng, during this first visit in public after so long a seclusion, was undescribable. During the evening we met many old acquaintances; some who pretended igno-

rance of our past embarrassments, and others who joined us with the ease of fashionable apathy : among these was lord Lyttelton, who insolently remarked, "that, notwithstanding all that had passed, I was handsomer than ever."—I made no reply but by a look of scornful indignation, which silenced the bold, the unfeeling commentator, and convinced him that, though fallen in fortune, I was still high in pride.

Mr Robinson having once more obtained his liberty, how were we to subsist honourably and above reproach? He applied to his father, but every aid was refused; he could not follow his profession, because he had not completed his articles of clerkship. I resolved on turning my thoughts towards literary labour, and projected a variety of works, by which I hoped to obtain at least a decent independence. Alas! how little did I then know either the fatigue or the hazard of mental occupations! How little did I foresee that the day would come, when my health would be impaired, my thoughts perpetually employed, in so destructive a pursuit! At the moment that I write this page I feel in every fibre of my brain the fatal conviction that it is a *destroying labour*.

It was at this moment of anxiety, of hope, of fear, that my thoughts once more were turned to a dramatic life; and, walking with my husband in St James's park, late in the autumn, we were accosted by Mr Brereton of Drury lane theatre. I had not seen him during the last two years, and he seemed rejoiced in having met us. At that period we lodged at Lyne's, the confectioner, in Old Bond street. Mr Brereton went home and dined with us; and after dinner the conversation turned on my partiality to the stage, which he earnestly recommended as a scene of great promise to what he termed my promising talents. The idea rushed like electricity through my brain. I asked Mr Robinson's opinion, and he now readily consented to my making the trial. He had

repeatedly written to his father, requesting even the smallest aid towards our support until he could embark in his profession; but every letter remained unanswered, and we had no hope but in our own mental exertions.

Some time after this period we removed to a more quiet situation, and occupied a very neat and comfortable suite of apartments in Newman street. I was then some months advanced in a state of domestic solicitude, and my health seemed in a precarious state, owing to my having too long devoted myself to the duties of a mother in nursing my eldest daughter Maria. It was in this lodging that, one morning, wholly unexpectedly, Mr Brereton made us a second visit, bringing with him a friend, whom he introduced on entering the drawing-room. This stranger was Mr Sheridan.

I was overwhelmed with confusion: I know not why; but I felt a sense of mortification when I observed that my appearance was carelessly *dishabillé*, and my mind as little prepared for what I guessed to be the motive of his visit. I however soon recovered my recollection, and the theatre was consequently the topic of discourse.

At Mr Sheridan's earnest entreaties I recited some passages from Shakespeare; I was alarmed and timid; but the gentleness of his manners, and the impressive encouragement he gave me, dissipated my fears, and tempted me to go on.

Mr Sheridan had then recently purchased a share of Drury lane theatre, in conjunction with Mr Lacey and doctor Ford: he was already celebrated as the author of *The Rivals* and *The Duenna*, and his mind was evidently portrayed in his manners, which were strikingly and bewitchingly attractive.

The encouragement which I received in this essay, and the praises which Mr Sheridan lavishly bestowed, determined me to make a public trial of my talents; and several visits, which were rapidly repeated by Mr

Sheridan, at length produced an arrangement for that period. My intention was intimated to Mr Garrick, who, though he had for some seasons retired from the stage, kindly promised protection, and as kindly undertook to be my tutor.

The only objection which I felt to the idea of appearing on the stage, was my then increasing state of domestic solicitude. I was, at the period when Mr Sheridan was first presented to me, some months advanced in that situation which afterwards, by the birth of Sophia, made me a second time a mother. Yet such was my imprudent fondness for Maria, that I was still a nurse; and my constitution was very considerably impaired by the effects of these combining circumstances.

An appointment was made in the green-room of Drury-lane theatre. Mr Garrick, Mr Sheridan, Mr Brereton, and my husband, were present; I there recited the principal scenes of Juliet (Mr Brereton repeating those of Romeo) and Mr Garrick, without hesitation, fixed on that character as the trial of my *debut*.

It is impossible to describe the various emotions of hope and fear that possessed my mind when the important day was announced in the play-bills. I wrote to the duchess of Devonshire at Chatsworth, informing her of my purposed trial, and received a kind letter of approbation, sanctioning my plan and wishing me success. Every longing of my heart seemed now to be completely gratified; and, with zeal bordering on delight, I prepared for my approaching effort.

Mr Garrick had been indefatigable at the rehearsals; frequently going through the whole character of Romeo himself, until he was completely exhausted with the fatigue of recitation. This was only a short period before the death of that distinguished actor.

The theatre was crowded with fashionable spectators; the green-room and orchestra (where Mr

Garrick sat during the night) were thronged with critics. My dress was a pale pink satin, trimmed with crape, richly spangled with silver ; my head was ornamented with white feathers, and my monumental suit, for the last scene, was white satin and completely plain ; excepting that I wore a veil of the most transparent gauze, which fell quite to my feet from the back of my head, and a string of beads round my waist, to which was suspended a cross appropriately fashioned.

When I approached the side wing my heart throbbed convulsively ; I then began to fear that my resolution would fail, and I leaned upon the nurse's arm, almost fainting. Mr Sheridan and several other friends encouraged me to proceed ; and at length, with trembling limbs and fearful apprehension, I approached the audience.

The thundering applause that greeted me, nearly overpowered all my faculties. I stood mute and bending with alarm, which did not subside till I had feebly articulated the few sentences of the first short scene, during the whole of which I had never once ventured to look at the audience.

On my return to the Green room, I was again encouraged, as far as my looks were deemed deserving of approbation ; for of my powers nothing yet could be known, my fears having as it were palsied both my voice and action. The second scene being the masquerade, I had time to collect myself. I never shall forget the sensation which rushed through my bosom when I first looked towards the pit. I beheld a gradual ascent of heads : all eyes were fixed upon me ; and the sensation they conveyed was awfully impressive : but the keen, the penetrating eyes of Mr Garrick, darting their lustre from the centre of the orchestra, were, beyond all others, the objects most conspicuous.

As I acquired courage I found the applause augment ; and the night was concluded with peals of

clamorous approbation. I was complimented on all sides; but the praise of one object, whom most I wished to please, was flattering even to the extent of human vanity. I then experienced, for the first time in my life, a gratification which language could not utter. I heard one of the most fascinating men, and the most distinguished geniuses of the age honour me with partial approbation: a new sensation seemed to awake in my bosom: I felt that emulation which the soul delights to encourage, where the attainment of fame will be pleasing to the esteemed object. I had till that period known no impulse beyond that of friendship; I had been an example of conjugal fidelity; but I had never known the perils to which the feeling heart is subjected in a union of regard wholly uninfluenced by the affections of the soul.

The second character which I played was Amanda, in *A Trip to Scarbro'*. The play was altered from Vanbrugh's *Relapse*; and the audience, supposing it was a new piece, on finding themselves deceived, expressed a considerable degree of disapprobation. I was terrified beyond imagination, when Mrs Yates, no longer able to bear the hissing of the audience, quitted the scene, and left me alone to encounter the critic tempest. I stood for some moments as though I had been petrified: Mr Sheridan, from the side wing, desired me not to quit the boards: the late duke of Cumberland, from the stage box, bade me take courage:—"It is not you, but the play, they hiss," said his Royal Highness. I curtsied; and that curtsy seemed to electrify the whole house; for a thundering peal of encouraging applause followed,—the comedy was suffered to go on, and is to this hour a stock play at Drury lane theatre.

The third character I played, was Statira in *Alexander the Great*. Mr Lacey, then one of the proprietors of Drury-lane theatre, was the hero of the night and the part of Roxana was performed by Mrs Melmoth. Again I was received with an *éclat*

that gratified my vanity. My dress was white and blue, made after the Persian *costume* ; and though it was then singular on the stage, I wore neither a hoop nor powder ; my feet were bound by sandals richly ornamented ; and the whole dress was picturesque and characteristic.

Though I was always received with the most flattering approbation, the characters in which I was most popular were Ophelia, Juliet, and Rosalind. Palmira was also one of my most approved representations. The last character which I played was *Sir Harry Revel*, in lady Craven's comedy of *The Miniature Picture* ; and the epilogue song in *The Irish Widow* was my last farewell to the labour of my profession.

Mr Sheridan now informed me, he wished that I would accustom myself to appear in comedy ; because tragedy seemed evidently, as well as my *forte*, to be my preference. At the same time he acquainted me that he wished me to perform a part in *The School for Scandal*. I was now so unshaped by my increasing size, that I made my excuses, informing Mr Sheridan, that probably I should be confined to my chamber at the period when his since celebrated play would first make its appearance. He accepted the apology, and in a short time I gave to the world my second child, Sophia. I now resided in Southampton street, Covent garden.

Previous to this event I had my benefit night, on which I performed the part of Fanny in *The Clandestine Marriage*. Mr King, the Lord Ogleby ; Miss Pope, Miss Sterling ; and Mrs Heidelbergh, Mrs Hopkins.

Mr Sheridan's attentions to me were unremitting : he took pleasure in promoting my consequence at the theatre ; he praised my talents, and he interested himself in my domestic comforts. I was engaged previous to my *debut* ; and I received what, at that time, was considered as a handsome salary. My

benefit was flatteringly attended: the boxes were filled with persons of the very highest rank and fashion; and I looked forward with delight both to celebrity and to fortune.

At the end of six weeks I lost my infant. She expired in my arms in convulsions, and my distress was undescrivable. On the day of its dissolution Mr Sheridan called on me; the little sufferer was on my lap, and I was watching it with agonizing anxiety. Five months had then elapsed since Mr Sheridan was first introduced to me; and though, during that period, I had seen many proofs of his exquisite sensibility, I never had witnessed one which so strongly impressed my mind as his countenance on entering my apartment: probably he has forgotten the feeling of the moment; but its impression will by me be remembered for ever.

I had not power to speak. All he uttered was, "Beautiful little creature!" at the same time looking on my infant, and sighing with a degree of sympathetic sorrow which penetrated my soul. Had I ever heard *such a sigh* from a husband's bosom? Alas! I never knew the sweet soothing solace of wedded sympathy; I never was beloved by him whom destiny allotted to be the legal ruler of my actions. I do not condemn Mr Robinson; I but too well know that we cannot command our affections. I only lament that he did not observe some decency in his infidelities; and that while he gratified his *own* caprice, he forgot how much he exposed his *wife* to the most degrading mortifications.

The death of Sophia so deeply affected my spirits, that I was rendered totally incapable of appearing again that season. I therefore obtained Mr Sheridan's permission to visit Bath for the recovery of my repose. From Bath I went to Bristol—to *Bristol!* Why does my pen seem suddenly arrested while I write the word? I know not why, but an undefinable melancholy always follows the idea of my native birth-place. I instantly beheld the Gothic structure, the

lonely cloisters, the lofty aisles, of the antique Minister:—for, within a few short paces of its walls, this breast, which has never known *one year of happiness*, first palpitated on inhaling the air of this bad world! Is it within its consecrated precincts that this heart shall shortly moulder? Heaven only knows, and to its will I bow implicitly.

I transcribe this passage on the twenty-ninth of March 1800. I feel my health decaying, my spirit broken. I look back without regret that so many of my days are numbered; and, were it in my power to choose, I would not wish to measure them again:—but whither am I wandering? I will resume my melancholy story.

Still restless, still perplexed with painful solitudes, I returned to London. I had not then, by many months, completed my nineteenth year. On my arrival I took lodgings in Leicester square. Mr Sheridan came to see me on my return to town, and communicated the melancholy fate of Mr Thomas Linley, the late brother of Mrs Sheridan: he was unfortunately drowned at the duke of Ancaster's. In a few days after, Mr Sheridan again made me a visit, with a proposal for an engagement to play during the summer at Mr Colman's theatre in the Haymarket. I had refused several offers from provincial managers, and felt an almost insurmountable aversion to the idea of strolling. Mr Sheridan nevertheless strongly recommended me to the acceptance of Mr Colman's offer; and I at last agreed to it, upon condition that the characters I should be expected to perform were selected and limited: to this Mr Colman readily consented.

The first part which was placed in the list was *Nancy Lovel*, in the comedy of *The Suicide*. I received the written character, and waited the rehearsal; but my astonishment was infinite, when I saw the name of Miss Farren* announced in the bills

* Now countess of Derby

I wrote a letter to Mr Colman, requesting an explanation. He replied, that he had promised the part to Miss Farren, who had then performed one or two seasons at the Haymarket theatre. I felt myself insulted. I insisted on Mr Colman's fulfilling his engagement, or on giving me liberty to quit London: the latter he refused. I demanded to perform the part of Nancy Lovel. Mr Colman was too partial to Miss Farren to hazard offending her. I refused to play till I had this first character, as by agreement, restored to me; and the summer passed without my once performing, though my salary was paid weekly and regularly.

During the following winter I performed, with increasing approbation, the following characters:—

Ophelia, in *Hamlet*.

Viola, in *Twelfth Night*.

Jacintha, in *The Suspicious Husband*.

Fidelia, in *The Plain Dealer*.

Rosalind, in *As You like It*.

Oriana, in *The Inconstant*.

Octavia, in *All for Love*.

Perdita, in *The Winter's Tale*.

Palmira, in *Mahomet*.

Cordelia, in *King Lear*.

Alinda, in *The Law of Lombardy*.

The Irish Widow.

Araminta, in *The Old Bachelor*.

Sir Harry Revel, in *The Miniature Picture*.

Emily, in *The Runaway*.

Miss Richley, in *The Discovery*.

Statira, in *Alexander the Great*.

Juliet, in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Amanda, in *The Trip to Scarbro'*.

Lady Anne, in *Richard the Third*.

Imogen, in *Cymbeline*.

Lady Macbeth, in *Macbeth*, &c. &c.

It was now that I began to know the perils atten-

dant on a dramatic life. It was at this period that the most alluring temptations were held out to alienate me from the paths of domestic quiet—domestic happiness, I cannot say, for it never was my destiny to know it. But I had still the consolation of an unsullied name. I had the highest female patronage, a circle of the most respectable and partial friends.

During this period I was daily visited by my best of mothers : my youngest brother had, the preceding winter, departed for Leghorn, where my eldest had been many years established as a merchant of the first respectability.

Were I to mention the names of those who held forth the temptations of fortune at this moment of public peril, I might create some reproaches in many families of the fashionable world. Among others who offered most liberally to purchase my indiscretion, was the late duke of Rutland : a settlement of six hundred pounds per annum was proposed as the means of estranging me entirely from my husband. I refused the offer. I wished to remain, in the eyes of the public, deserving of its patronage. I shall not enter into a minute detail of temptations which assailed my fortitude.

The flattering and zealous attentions which Mr Sheridan evinced were strikingly contrasting with the marked and increasing neglect of my husband. I now found that he supported two women, in one house, in Maiden lane, Covent garden. The one was a figure-dancer at Drury lane theatre ; the other, a woman of professed libertinism. With these he passed all his hours that he could steal from me ; and I found that my salary was at times inadequate to the expenses which were incurred by an enlarged circle of new acquaintance, which Mr Robinson had formed since my appearance in the dramatic scene. Added to this, the bond creditors became so clamorous, that the whole of my benefits were appropriated to their

demands ; and on the second year after my appearance at Drury lane theatre, Mr Robinson once more persuaded me to make a visit at Tregunter.

I was now received with more civility, and more warmly welcomed, than I had been on any former arrival. Though the *assumed sanctity* of Miss Robinson's manners condemned a dramatic life, the labour was deemed *profitable*, and the supposed immorality was consequently *tolerated* ! However repugnant to my feelings this visit was, still I hoped that it would promote my husband's interest, and confirm his reconciliation to his father ; I therefore resolved on undertaking it. I now felt that I could support myself honourably ; and the consciousness of independence is the only true felicity in this world of humiliations.

Mr Harris was now established in Tregunter house, and several parties were formed, both at home and abroad, for my amusement. I was consulted as the very oracle of fashions ; I was gazed at and examined with the most inquisitive curiosity. Mrs Robinson, the promising young actress, was a very different personage from Mrs Robinson who had been overwhelmed with sorrows, and came to ask an asylum under the roof of vulgar ostentation.—I remained only a fortnight in Wales, and then returned to London, to prepare for the opening of the theatre.

We stopped at Bath in our way to town, where Mr Robinson met with Mr George Brereton, with whom, at Newmarket, he had some time before become acquainted. Mr Brereton was a man of fortune and married to his beautiful cousin, the daughter of major Brereton, then master of the ceremonies at Bath. At a former period Mr Robinson had owed a sum of money to Mr George Brereton, for which he had given a promissory note. On our arrival at Bath we received a visit from this creditor, who assured Mr Robinson that he was in no haste for the payment of his note, and at the same time very

earnestly pressed us to remain a few days in that fashionable city. We were in no hurry to return to London, having still more than three weeks holidays. We resided at the Three Tuns, one of the best inns, and Mr Brereton was on all occasions particularly attentive.

The motive of this assiduity was at length revealed to me, by a violent and fervent declaration of love, which astonished and perplexed me. I knew that Mr Brereton was of a most impetuous temper; that he had fought many duels; that he was capable of any outrage; and that he had my husband completely in his power. Every advance which he had the temerity to make was by me rejected with indignation. I had not resolution to inform Mr Robinson of his danger, and I thought that the only chance of escaping it was to set out immediately for Bristol; where I wished to pass a few days, previous to my return to the metropolis.

On the following morning, as we were quitting the inn in Temple street, to visit Clifton, Mr Robinson was arrested at the suit of Mr George Brereton, who waited himself in an upper room in order to see the writ executed. I forget the exact sum for which Mr Robinson had given his promissory note; but I well remember that it was in magnitude beyond his power to pay. Our consternation was undescribable.

In a few minutes after, I was informed that a lady wished to speak with me. Concluding that it was some old acquaintance, and happy to feel that in this perplexing dilemma I had still a friend to speak to, I followed the waiter into another room. Mr Robinson was detained by the sheriff's officer.

On entering the apartment I beheld Mr George Brereton. "Well, madam," said he with a sarcastic smile, "you have involved your husband in a pretty embarrassment! Had you not been severe towards me, not only this paltry debt would have been cancelled, but any sum that I could command would

have been at his service. He has now either to pay me, to fight me, or to go to a prison ; and all because you treat me with such unexampled rigour."

I entreated him to reflect before he drove me to distraction.

"I have reflected ;" said he, "and I find that you possess the power to do with me what you will. Promise to return to Bath,—to behave more kindly,—and I will this moment discharge your husband."

I burst into tears.

"You cannot be so inhuman as to propose such terms!" said I.

"The inhumanity is on your side," answered Mr Brereton. "But I have no time to lose ; I must return to Bath ; my wife is dangerously ill ; and I do not wish to have my name exposed in a business of this nature."

"Then for heaven's sake release my husband!" said I. Mr Brereton smiled as he rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to look for his carriage. I now lost all command of myself, and, with the most severe invective, condemned the infamy of his conduct. "I *will* return to Bath," said I ; "but it shall be to expose *your* dishonourable, your barbarous machinations. I will inform that lovely wife how treacherously you have acted. I will proclaim to the world, that the common acts of seduction are not sufficiently depraved for the mind of a libertine and a gamester."

I uttered these words in so loud a tone of voice that he changed colour, and desired me to be discreet and patient.

"Never while you insult me, and hold my husband in your power," said I. "You have carried outrage almost to its fullest extent ; you have awakened all the pride and all the resentment of my soul : and I will proceed as I think proper."

He now endeavoured to soothe me. He assured me that he was actuated by a sincere regard for me ;

and that, knowing how little my husband valued me, he thought it would be an act of kindness to estrange me from him. "His neglect of you will justify any step you may take," added he; "and it is a matter of universal astonishment, that you, who upon other occasions can act with such becoming spirit, should tamely continue to bear such infidelities from a husband." I shuddered; for this plea had, in many instances, been urged as an excuse for libertine advances; and the indifference with which I was treated was, in the theatre, and in all my circle of friends, a subject of conversation.

Distressed beyond the power of utterance at this new humiliation, I paced the room with agonizing inquietude. "How little does such a husband deserve such a wife!" continued Mr Brereton; "how tasteless must he be, to leave such a woman for the very lowest and most degraded of the sex! Quit him, and fly with me. I am ready to make any sacrifice you demand. Shall I propose to Mr Robinson to let you go? Shall I offer him his liberty on condition that he allows you to separate yourself from him? By his conduct he proves that he does not love you; why then labour to support him?"—I was almost frantic.

"Here, madam," continued Mr Brereton, after pausing four or five minutes, "here is your husband's release." So saying, he threw a written paper on the table.—"Now," added he, "I rely on your generosity."

I trembled, and was incapable of speaking. Mr Brereton conjured me to compose my spirits, and to conceal my distress from the people of the inn. "I will return to Bath," said he: "I shall there expect to see you." He now quitted the room. I saw him get into his chaise and drive from the inn door. I then hastened to my husband with the discharge; and all expenses of the arrest being shortly after settled, we set out for Bath.

Mr Robinson scarcely inquired what had passed ; but I assured him that my persuasions had produced so sudden a change in Mr Brereton's conduct. I said that I hoped he would never again place his freedom in the hands of a gamester, or his wife's repose in the power of a libertine. He seemed insensible of the peril attending both the one and the other.

Expecting letters by the post, we waited the following day, which was Sunday, at Bath ; though, in order to avoid Mr Brereton, we removed to the White Lion inn. But what was my astonishment, in the afternoon, when, standing at the window, I saw Mr George Brereton walking on the opposite side of the way, with his wife and her no less lovely sister ! I now found that the story of her dangerous illness was untrue, and I flattered myself that I was not seen before I retired from the window.

We now sat down to dinner, and in a few minutes Mr George Brereton was announced by the waiter. He coldly bowed to me, and instantly made a thousand apologies to Mr Robinson ; declared that he had paid the note away ; that he was menaced for the money ; and that he came to Bristol, though too late, to prevent the arrest which had happened. Mr Robinson sceptically replied, that it was now of little importance ; and Mr Brereton took his leave, saying that he should have the honour of seeing us again in the evening. We did not wait for his company ; but immediately after dinner set out for London.

On my arrival in town I saw Mr Sheridan, whose manner had lost nothing of its interesting attention. He continued to visit me very frequently, and always gave me the most friendly counsel. He knew that I was not properly protected by Mr Robinson ; but he was too generous to build his gratification on the detraction of another. The happiest moments I then knew, were passed in the society of this distinguished being. He saw me ill-bestowed upon a

man who neither loved nor valued me ; he lamented my destiny, but with such delicate propriety, that it consoled while it revealed to me the unhappiness of my situation. On my return to town the duke of Rutland renewed his solicitations. I also received the most unbounded professions of esteem and admiration from several other persons. Among the list, I was addressed with proposals of a libertine nature by a *royal* duke, a *lofty* marquis, and a city merchant of considerable fortune, conveyed through the medium of milliners, mantua-makers, &c. &c. Just at this period my eldest brother visited England ; but such was his unconquerable aversion to my profession as an actress, that he only once, during a residence of some months in London, attempted to see me perform. He then only attempted it : for, on my advancing on the boards, he started from his seat in the stage-box, and instantly quitted the theatre. My dear mother had no less a dislike to the pursuit : she never beheld me on the stage but with a painful regret. Fortunately my father remained some years out of England, so that he never saw me in my professional character.

My popularity increasing every night that I appeared, my prospects, both of fame and affluence, began to brighten. We now hired the house which is situated between the Hummums and the Bedford Arms, in Covent garden ; it had been built (I believe) by doctor Fisher, who married the widow of the celebrated actor Powel ; but Mr Robinson took the premises of Mrs Mattocks, of Covent garden theatre. The house was particularly convenient in every respect ; but, above all, on account of its vicinity to Drury lane. Here I hoped to enjoy, at least, some cheerful days, as I found that my circle of friends increased almost hourly.

One of those who paid me most attention was sir John Lade. The good-natured baronet, who was then just of age, was our constant visitor ; and cards

contributed to beguile those evenings that were not devoted to dramatic labour. Mr Robinson played more deeply than was discreet, but he was, at the end of a few weeks, a very considerable winner.

In proportion as play obtained its influence over my husband's mind, his small portion of remaining regard for me visibly decayed. We now had horses, a phaeton and ponies; and my fashions in dress were followed with flattering avidity. My house was thronged with visitors, and my morning levees were crowded so that I could scarcely find a quiet hour for study. My brother by this time had returned to Italy.

Mr Sheridan was still my most esteemed of friends. He advised me with the gentlest anxiety, and he warned me of the danger which expense would produce, and which might interrupt the rising progress of my dramatic reputation. He saw the trophies which flattery strewed in my way; and he lamented that I was on every side surrounded with temptations. There was a something beautifully sympathetic in every word he uttered: his admonitions seemed as if dictated by a prescient power, which told him that I was *destined to be deceived!*

Situated as I was at this time, the effort was difficult to avoid the society of Mr Sheridan. He was manager of the theatre. I could not avoid seeing and conversing with him at rehearsals and behind the scenes, and his conversation was always such as to fascinate and charm me. The brilliant reputation which he had justly acquired for superior talents, and the fame which was completed by his celebrated 'School for Scandal,' had now rendered him so admired, that all ranks of people courted his society. The green room was frequented by nobility and men of genius; among these were Mr Fox and the earl of Derby. The stage was now enlightened by the very best critics, and embellished by the very highest talents; and it is not a little remarkable, that the

drama was uncommonly productive, the theatre more than usually attended, during that season when the principal dramatic characters were performed by women under the age of twenty. Among these were Miss Farren (now lady Derby), Miss Walpole (now Mrs Atkins), Miss P. Hopkins (now Mrs John Kemble), and myself.

I had then been married more than four years, my daughter Maria Elizabeth was nearly three years old. I had been then seen and known at all public places from the age of fifteen; yet I knew as little of the world's deceptions, as though I had been educated in the deserts of Siberia. I believed every woman friendly, every man sincere, till I discovered proofs that their characters were deceptive.

I had now performed two seasons, in tragedy and comedy, with Miss Farren and the late Mr Henderson. My first appearance in *Palmira* (in *Mahomet*) was with the *Zaphna* of Mr J. Bannister, the preceding year; and though the extraordinary comic powers of this excellent actor and amiable man have established his reputation as a comedian, his first essay in tragedy was considered as a night of the most distinguished promise. The duchess of Devonshire still honoured me with her patronage and friendship, and I also possessed the esteem of several respectable and distinguished females.

The play of *THE WINTER'S TALE* was this season commanded by their majesties. I never had performed before the royal family; and the first character in which I was destined to appear, was that of *PERDITA*. I had frequently played the part, both with the *Hermione* of Mrs Hartley and of Miss Farren: but I felt a strange degree of alarm when I found my name announced to perform it before the royal family.

In the green room I was rallied on the occasion; and Mr Smith, whose gentlemanly manners and enlightened conversation rendered him an ornament to

the profession, who performed the part of Leontes, laughingly exclaimed, "By Jove, Mrs Robinson, you will make a conquest of the prince; for to-night you look handsomer than ever." I smiled at the unmerited compliment, and little foresaw the vast variety of events that would arise from that night's exhibition!

As I stood in the wing opposite the prince's box, waiting to go on the stage, Mr Ford, the manager's son, and now a respectable defender of the laws, presented a friend who accompanied him; this friend was lord viscount Malden, now earl of Essex.

We entered into conversation during a few minutes, the prince of Wales all the time observing us, and frequently speaking to colonel (now *general*) Lake, and to the honourable Mr Legge, brother to lord Lewisham, who was in waiting on his royal highness. I hurried through the first scene, not without much embarrassment, owing to the fixed attention with which the prince of Wales honoured me. Indeed, some flattering remarks which were made by his royal highness met my ear as I stood near his box, and I was overwhelmed with confusion.

The prince's particular attention was observed by every one, and I was again rallied at the end of the play. On the last curtsy, the royal family condescendingly returned a bow to the performers; but just as the curtain was falling, my eyes met those of the prince of Wales; and with a look that I *never shall forget*, he gently inclined his head a second time; I felt the compliment, and blushed my gratitude.

During the entertainment lord Malden never ceased conversing with me: he was young, pleasing, and perfectly accomplished. He remarked the particular applause which the prince had bestowed on my performance; said a thousand civil things; and detained me in conversation till the evening's performance was concluded.

I was now going to my chair, which waited, when

I met the royal family crossing the stage. I was again honoured with a very marked and low bow from the prince of Wales.—On my return home, I had a party to supper; and the whole conversation centred in encomiums on the person, graces, and amiable manners of the illustrious heir apparent.

Within two or three days of this time, lord Malden made me a morning visit: Mr Robinson was not at home, and I received him rather awkwardly. But his lordship's embarrassment far exceeded mine: he attempted to speak—paused, hesitated, apologized; I knew not why. He hoped I would pardon him; that I would not mention something he had to communicate; that I would consider the peculiar delicacy of his situation, and then act as I thought proper.—I could not comprehend his meaning, and therefore requested that he would be explicit.

After some moments of evident rumination, he tremblingly drew a small letter from his pocket. I took it, and knew not what to say. It was addressed to PERDITA. I smiled, I believe rather sarcastically, and opened the *billet*. It contained only a few words, but those expressive of more than common civility: they were signed FLORIZEL.*

“Well, my lord, and what does this mean?” said I, half angry.

“Can you not guess the writer?” said lord Malden.

“Perhaps yourself, my lord,” cried I, gravely.

“Upon my honour, no,” said the viscount. “I should not have dared so to address you on so short an acquaintance.”

I pressed him to tell me from whom the letter came.—He again hesitated; he seemed confused, and sorry that he had undertaken to deliver it. “I hope that I shall not forfeit your good opinion;” said he, “but”——

* Those who have read *The Winter's Tale* will know the significance of these adopted names.

“ But what, my lord ? ”

“ I could not refuse,—for the letter is from the prince of Wales.”

I was astonished ; I confess that I was agitated ; but I was also somewhat sceptical as to the truth of lord Malden’s assertion. I returned a formal and a doubtful answer ; and his lordship shortly after took his leave.

A thousand times did I read this short but expressive letter ; still I did not implicitly believe that it was written by the prince ; I rather considered it as an experiment made by lord Malden, either on my vanity or propriety of conduct. On the next evening the viscount repeated his visit : we had a card-party of six or seven, and the prince of Wales was again the subject of unbounded panegyric. Lord Malden spoke of his royal highness’s manners as the most polished and fascinating ; of his temper as the most engaging ; and of his mind, the most replete with every amiable sentiment. I heard these praises, and my heart beat with conscious pride, while memory turned to the partial but delicately respectful letter which I had received on the preceding morning.

The next day lord Malden brought me a second letter. He assured me that the prince was most unhappy lest I should be offended at his conduct, and that he conjured me to go that night to the Oratorio, where he would by some signal convince me that he was the writer of the letters, supposing I was still sceptical as to their authenticity.

I went to the Oratorio ; and, on taking my seat in the balcony-box, the prince almost instantaneously observed me. He held the printed bill before his face, and drew his hand across his forehead ; still fixing his eyes on me. I was confused, and knew not what to do. My husband was with me, and I was fearful of his observing what passed. Still the prince continued to make signs, such as moving his hand on the edge of the box as if writing, then speaking

to the duke of York (then bishop of Osnaburg), who also looked towards me with particular attention.

I now observed one of the gentlemen in waiting bring the prince a glass of water : before he raised it to his lips he looked at me. So marked was his royal highness's conduct that many of the audience observed it ; several persons in the pit directed their gaze at the place where I sat ; and, on the following day, one of the diurnal prints observed that there was one passage in Dryden's Ode which seemed particularly interesting to the prince of Wales, who

“ Gazed on the fair

“ Who caused his care,

“ And sigh'd, and look'd, and sigh'd again.”

However flattering it might have been to female vanity, to know that the most admired, and most accomplished prince in Europe was devotedly attached to me ; however dangerous to the heart such idolatry as his royal highness, during many months, professed in almost daily letters, which were conveyed to me by lord Malden, still I declined any interview with his royal highness. I was not insensible to all his powers of attraction ; I thought him one of the most amiable of men. There was a beautiful ingenuousness in his language, a warm and enthusiastic adoration, expressed in every letter, which interested and charmed me. During the whole spring, till the theatre closed, this correspondence continued ; every day giving me some new assurance of inviolable affection.

After we had corresponded some months without ever speaking to each other (for I still declined meeting his royal highness, from a dread of the *éclat* which such a connection would produce, and the fear of injuring him in the opinion of his royal relatives), I received, through the hands of lord Malden, the prince's portrait in miniature, painted by the late Mr Meyer. This picture is now in my possession.

Within the case was a small heart cut in paper, which I also have; on one side was written, *Je ne change qu'en mourant*. On the other, *Unalterable to my Perdita through life*.

During many months of confidential correspondence, I always offered his royal highness the best advice in my power; I disclaimed every sordid and interested thought; I recommended to him to be patient till he should become his own master; to wait till he knew more of my mind and manners, before he engaged in a public attachment to me; and, above all, to do nothing that might incur the displeasure of his royal highness's family. I entreated him to recollect that he was young, and led on by the impetuosity of passion; that should I consent to quit my profession and my husband, I should be thrown entirely on his mercy. I strongly pictured the temptations to which beauty would expose him; the many arts that would be practised to undermine me in his affections; the public abuse which calumny and envy would heap upon me; and the misery I should suffer, if, after I had given him every proof of confidence, he should change in his sentiments towards me. To all this I received repeated assurances of inviolable affection; and I most firmly believe that his royal highness meant what he professed: indeed, his soul was too ingenuous, his mind too liberal, and his heart too susceptible, to deceive premeditatedly, or to harbour even for a moment the idea of deliberate deception.

At every interview with lord Malden I perceived that he regretted the task he had undertaken; but he assured me that the prince was almost frantic whenever he suggested a wish to decline interfering. Once I remember his lordship's telling me that the late duke of Cumberland had made him a visit early in the morning, at his house in Clarges street, informing him that the prince was most wretched on my account, and imploring him to continue his ser-

vices only a short time longer. The prince's establishment was then in agitation: at this period his royal highness still resided in Buckingham house.

A proposal was now made that I should meet his royal highness at his apartments, in the disguise of male attire. I was accustomed to perform in that dress, and the prince had seen me (I believe) in the character of the Irish Widow. To this plan I decidedly objected. The indelicacy of such a step, as well as the danger of detection, made me shrink from the proposal. My refusal threw his royal highness into the most distressing agitation, as was expressed by the letter which I received on the following morning. Lord Malden again lamented that he had engaged himself in the intercourse, and declared that he had himself conceived so violent a passion for me that he was the most miserable and unfortunate of mortals.

During this period, though Mr Robinson was a stranger to my epistolary intercourse with the prince, his conduct was entirely neglectful. He was perfectly careless respecting my fame and my repose; passed his leisure hours with the most abandoned women, and even my own servants complained of his illicit advances. I remember one, who was plain even to ugliness; she was short, ill-made, squalid, and dirty: once, on my return from a rehearsal, I found that this woman was locked with my husband in my chamber. I also knew that Mr Robinson continued his connection with a female who lodged in Maiden lane, and who was only one of the few that proved his domestic apostacy.

His indifference naturally produced an alienation of esteem on my side, and the increasing adoration of the most enchanting of mortals hourly reconciled my mind to the idea of a separation. The unbounded assurances of lasting affection which I received from his royal highness in many scores of the most eloquent letters, the contempt which I experienced from my

husband, and the perpetual labour which I underwent for his support, at length began to weary my fortitude. Still I was reluctant to become the theme of public animadversion, and still I remonstrated with my husband on the unkindness of his conduct. * *

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[The narrative of Mrs Robinson closes here.]

CONTINUATION.

BY A FRIEND.

AMONG those persons who have at various periods attracted the attention of the public, there are few whose virtues have been so little known, or whose characters have been so unfairly estimated, as the subject of the preceding Memoir. To compress within narrow limits the numerous circumstances by which the later years of Mrs Robinson's life were chequered, will be a task of no little difficulty. The earlier periods of her existence, rendered more interesting as narrated by her own pen, have doubtlessly been justly appreciated by the reflecting and candid reader, whose sympathy they could not fail to awaken. That she lived not to conclude the history of a life scarcely less eventful than unfortunate, cannot but afford a subject of sincere regret.

The conflicts which shook the mind, and the passions which succeeded to each other in the breast of Mrs Robinson, at the period when her narrative closes, a crisis perhaps the most important in her life, may be more easily conceived than described. A laborious though captivating profession, the profits of which were unequal to the expenses of her establishment, and the assiduities of her illustrious lover, to whom she naturally looked for protection, combined to divide her attention and bewilder her inexperienced mind. The partiality of her royal admirer had begun to excite observation, to awaken curiosity

and to provoke the malignant passions, which, under an affected concern for decorum, assumed the guise of virtue. The daily prints teemed with hints of the favour of Mrs Robinson with "one whose manners were resistless, and whose smile was victory." These circumstances, added to the constant devoirs of lord Malden, whose attentions were as little understood as maliciously interpreted, conspired to distract a young creature, whose exposed situation, whose wavering and unformed character, rendered her but too obnoxious to a thousand errors and perils.

To terminate her correspondence with the prince appeared the most painful remedy that could be adopted by a heart fascinated with his accomplishments, and soothed by his professions of inviolable attachment. She was aware that, in the eye of the world, the reputation of the wife is supposed unsullied while the husband, enduring passively his dishonour, gives to her the sanction of his protection. The circles of fashion afforded more than one instance of this obliging acquiescence in matrimonial turpitude. Could Mrs Robinson have reconciled it to her own feelings to remain under the roof of her husband, whose protection she had forfeited, and to add insult to infidelity, the attentions of her illustrious admirer might have given to her popularity an additional éclat. Neither might her husband have suffered in his worldly prospects, from being to the motives of his royal visitor a little complaisantly blind. But her ingenuous nature would not permit her to render the man for whom she had once felt an affection an object of ridicule and contempt. She determined therefore to brave the world, and, for a support against its censures, to rely on the protection and friendship of him to whom she sacrificed its respect.

The managers of Drury lane theatre suspecting that Mrs Robinson purposed, at the conclusion of the season, to withdraw from the stage, omitted no means that might tend to induce her to renew her

engagements. With this view, they offered a considerable advance to her salary, while to their solicitations she returned undecisive answers. Hourly rising in a profession to which she was enthusiastically attached, the public plaudits which her appearance never failed to excite, were too gratifying to be relinquished without regret.

During this irresolution, she was persecuted by numerous anonymous letters, which she continued to treat with derision or contempt. The correspondence between Mrs Robinson and the prince had hitherto been merely epistolary. This intercourse had lasted several months, Mrs Robinson not having acquired sufficient courage to venture a personal interview, and bid defiance to the reproaches of the world.

At length, after many alternations of feeling, an interview with her royal lover was consented to by Mrs Robinson, and proposed, by the management of lord Malden, to take place at his lordship's residence in Dean street, May fair. But the restricted situation of the prince, controlled by a rigid tutor, rendered this project of difficult execution. A visit to Buckingham house was then mentioned; to which Mrs Robinson positively objected, as a rash attempt, abounding in peril to her august admirer. Lord Malden being again consulted, it was determined that the prince should meet Mrs Robinson for a few moments at Kew, on the banks of the Thames, opposite to the old palace, then the summer residence of the elder princes. For an account of this incident, an extract from a letter of Mrs Robinson, written some years afterwards to a valued and since deceased friend, who during the period of these events resided in America, may not be unacceptable to the reader. The date of this letter is in 1783.

“ At length an evening was fixed for this long dreaded interview. Lord Malden and myself dined at the inn on the island between Kew and Brentford. We waited the signal for crossing the river in a boat

which had been engaged for the purpose. Heaven can witness how many conflicts my agitated heart endured at this most important moment ! I admired the prince ; I felt grateful for his affection. He was the most engaging of created beings. I had corresponded with him during many months, and his eloquent letters, the exquisite sensibility which breathed through every line, his ardent professions of adoration, had combined to shake my feeble resolution. The handkerchief was waved on the opposite shore ; but the signal was, by the dusk of the evening, rendered almost imperceptible. Lord Malden took my hand, I stepped into the boat, and in a few minutes we landed before the iron gates of old Kew palace. The interview was but of a moment. The prince of Wales and the duke of York (then bishop of Osnaburg) were walking down the avenue. They hastened to meet us. A few words, and those scarcely articulate, were uttered by the prince, when a noise of people approaching from the palace startled us. The moon was now rising ; and the idea of being overheard, or of his royal highness being seen out at so unusual an hour terrified the whole group. After a few more words of the most affectionate nature uttered by the prince, we parted, and lord Malden and myself returned to the island. The prince never quitted the avenue, nor the presence of the duke of York, during the whole of this short meeting. Alas ! my friend, if my mind was before influenced by esteem, it was now awakened to the most enthusiastic admiration. The rank of the prince no longer chilled into awe that being, who now considered him as the lover and the friend. The graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene shall be forgotten.

“ Many and frequent were the interviews which afterwards took place at this romantic spot ; our

walks sometimes continued till past midnight, the duke of York and lord Malden were always of the party, our conversation was composed of general topics. The prince had from his infancy been wholly secluded, and naturally took much pleasure in conversing about the busy world, its manners and pursuits, characters, and scenery. Nothing could be more delightful or more rational than our midnight perambulations. I always wore a dark coloured habit; the rest of our party generally wrapped themselves in great coats to disguise them, excepting the duke of York, who almost universally alarmed us by the display of a *buff* coat, the most conspicuous colour he could have selected for an adventure of this nature. The polished and fascinating ingenuousness of his royal highness's manners contributed not a little to enliven our promenades. He sung with exquisite taste; and the tones of his voice breaking on the silence of the night, have often appeared to my entranced senses like more than mortal melody. Often have I lamented the distance which destiny had placed between us: how would my soul have idolized such a *husband*! Alas! how often, in the ardent enthusiasm of my soul, have I formed the wish that that being were *mine alone*! to whom partial millions were to look up for protection.

“The duke of York was now on the eve of quitting the country for Hanover; the prince was also on the point of receiving his first establishment; and the apprehension that his attachment to a married woman might injure his royal highness in the opinion of the world, rendered the caution which we invariably observed of the utmost importance. A considerable time elapsed in these delightful scenes of visionary happiness. The prince's attachment seemed to increase daily, and I considered myself as the most blest of human beings. During some time we had enjoyed our meetings in the neighbourhood of Kew, and I now only looked forward to the adjusting of his

royal highness's establishment for the public avowal of our mutual attachment.

"I had relinquished my profession. The last night of my appearance on the stage, I represented the character of sir Harry Revel, in the comedy of 'The Miniature Picture,' written by lady Craven;* and the Irish Widow. On entering the green-room, I informed Mr Moody, who played in the farce, that I should appear no more after that night; and, endeavouring to smile while I sung, I repeated,

" Oh joy to you all in full measure,
So wishes and prays Widow Brady !"

which were the last lines of my song in 'The Irish Widow.' This effort to conceal the emotion I felt on quitting a profession I enthusiastically loved, was of short duration; and I burst into tears on my appearance. My regret at recollecting that I was treading for the last time the boards where I had so often received the most gratifying testimonies of public approbation; where mental exertion had been emboldened by private worth; that I was flying from a happy certainty, perhaps to pursue the phantom disappointment, nearly overwhelmed my faculties, and for some time deprived me of the power of articulation. Fortunately, the person on the stage with me had to begin the scene, which allowed me time to collect myself. I went, however, mechanically dull through the business of the evening, and, notwithstanding the cheering expressions and applause of the audience, I was several times near fainting.

"The daily prints now indulged the malice of my enemies by the most scandalous paragraphs respecting the prince of Wales and myself. I found it was now too late to stop the hourly augmenting torrent of abuse that was poured upon me from all quarters. Whenever I appeared in public, I was overwhelmed

* Now margravine of Anspach.

by the gazing of the multitude. I was frequently obliged to quit Ranelagh, owing to the crowd which staring curiosity had assembled round my box; and, even in the streets of the metropolis I scarcely ventured to enter a shop without experiencing the greatest inconvenience. Many hours have I waited till the crowd dispersed which surrounded my carriage, in expectation of my quitting the shop. I cannot suppress a smile at the absurdity of such proceeding, when I remember that, during nearly three seasons, I was almost every night upon the stage, and that I had then been near five years with Mr Robinson at every fashionable place of entertainment. You, my dear sir, in your quiet haunts of transatlantic simplicity, will find some difficulty in reconciling these things to your mind—these unaccountable instances of national absurdity. Yet, so it is. I am well assured, that were a being possessed of more than human endowments to visit this country, it would experience indifference, if not total neglect, while a less worthy mortal might be worshipped as the idol of its day, if whispered into notoriety by the comments of the multitude. But, thank heaven! my heart was not formed in the mould of callous effrontery. I shuddered at the gulph before me, and felt small gratification in the knowledge of having taken a step, which many who condemned would have been no less willing to imitate, had they been placed in the same situation.

“Previous to my first interview with his royal highness, in one of his letters I was astonished to find a bond of the most solemn and binding nature, containing a promise of the sum of twenty thousand pounds, to be paid at the period of his royal highness’s coming of age.

“This paper was signed by the prince, and sealed with the royal arms. It was expressed in terms so liberal, so voluntary, so marked by true affection, that I had scarcely power to read it. My tears, ex-

cited by the most agonizing conflicts, obscured the letters, and nearly blotted out those sentiments, which will be impressed upon my mind till the latest period of my existence. Still, I felt shocked and mortified at the indelicate idea of entering into any pecuniary engagements with a prince, on whose establishment I relied for the enjoyment of all that would render life desirable. I was surprised at receiving it; the idea of interest had never entered my mind: secure in the possession of his heart, I had in that delightful certainty counted all my future treasure. I had refused many splendid gifts which his royal highness had proposed ordering for me at Grey's and other jewellers. The prince presented to me a few trifling ornaments, in the whole their value not exceeding one hundred guineas. Even these, on our separation, I returned to his royal highness through the hands of general Lake.

“The period now approached that was to destroy all the fairy visions which had filled my mind with dreams of happiness. At the moment when everything was preparing for his royal highness's establishment, when I looked impatiently for the arrival of that day, in which I might behold my adored friend gracefully receiving the acclamations of his future subjects; when I might enjoy the public protection of that being for whom I gave up all, I received a letter from his royal highness, a cold and unkind letter—briefly informing me that ‘*we must meet no more!*’

“And now, my friend, suffer me to call God to witness, that I was unconscious why this decision had taken place in his royal highness's mind: only two days previous to this letter being written I had seen the prince at Kew, and his affection appeared to be boundless as it was undiminished.

“Amazed, afflicted, beyond the power of utterance, I wrote immediately to his royal highness, requiring an explanation. He remained silent. Again I wrote,

but received no elucidation of this most cruel and extraordinary mystery. The prince was then at Windsor. I set out, in a small pony phaeton, wretched, and unaccompanied by any one except my postillion (a child of nine years of age). It was near dark when we quitted Hyde park corner. On my arrival at Hounslow, the innkeeper informed me, that every carriage which had passed the heath for the last ten nights had been attacked and rifled. I confess the idea of personal danger had no terrors for my mind in the state it then was, and the possibility of annihilation, divested of the crime of suicide, encouraged rather than diminished my determination of proceeding. We had scarcely reached the middle of the heath, when my horses were startled by the sudden appearance of a man rushing from the side of the road. The boy on perceiving him instantly spurred his pony, and, by a sudden bound of our light vehicle, the ruffian missed his grasp at the front rein. We now proceeded at full speed, while the foodpad ran endeavouring to overtake us. At length, my horses fortunately outrunning the perseverance of the assailant, we reached the first Magpie, a small inn on the heath, in safety. The alarm which, in spite of my resolution, this adventure had created, was augmented on my recollecting, for the first time, that I had then in my black stock a brilliant stud of very considerable value, which could only have been possessed by the robber by strangling the wearer.

“If my heart palpitated with joy at my escape from assassination, a circumstance soon after occurred that did not tend to quiet my emotion. This was the appearance of Mr H. Meynell and Mrs A *****. My foreboding soul instantly beheld a rival, and, with jealous eagerness, interpreted the hitherto inexplicable conduct of the prince, from his having frequently expressed his wish to know that lady.

“On my arrival the prince would not see me. My

agonies were now undescrivable. I consulted with lord Malden and the duke of Dorset, whose honourable mind and truly disinterested friendship had on many occasions been exemplified towards me. They were both at a loss to divine any cause of this sudden change in the prince's feelings. The prince of Wales had hitherto assiduously sought opportunities to distinguish me more publicly than was prudent in his royal highness's situation. This was in the month of August. On the fourth of the preceding June, I went, by his desire, into the chamberlain's box at the birth-night ball; the distressing observation of the circle was drawn towards the part of the box in which I sat by the marked and injudicious attentions of his royal highness. I had not been arrived many minutes before I witnessed a singular species of fashionable coquetry. Previous to his highness's beginning his minuet, I perceived a woman of high rank select from the bouquet which she wore two rosebuds, which she gave to the prince, as he afterwards informed me, 'emblematical of herself and him,' I observed his royal highness immediately beckon to a nobleman* who has since formed a part of his establishment, and, looking most earnestly at me, whisper a few words, at the same time presenting to him his newly-acquired trophy. In a few moments lord C. entered the chamberlain's box, and giving the rosebuds into my hands, informed me that he was commissioned by the prince to do so. I placed them in my bosom, and, I confess, felt proud of the power by which I thus publicly mortified an exalted rival. His royal highness now avowedly distinguished me at all public places of entertainment, at the king's hunt near Windsor, at the reviews, and at the theatres. The prince only seemed happy in evincing his affection towards me.

“How terrible then was the change to my feelings!

The earl of C.

And I again most SOLEMNLY REPEAT, that I was totally ignorant of any JUST CAUSE for so sudden an alteration.

“ My ‘good-natured friends’ now carefully informed me of the multitude of secret enemies who were ever employed in estranging the prince’s mind from me. So fascinating, so illustrious a lover could not fail to excite the envy of my own sex. Women of all descriptions were emulous of attracting his royal highness’s attention. Alas! I had neither *rank* nor power to oppose such adversaries. Every engine of female malice was set in motion to destroy my repose. and every petty calumny was repeated with tenfold embellishments. Tales of the most infamous and glaring falsehood were invented, and I was again assailed by pamphlets, by paragraphs, and caricatures, and all the artillery of slander, while the only being to whom I then looked up for protection, was so situated as to be unable to afford it.

“ Thus perplexed, I wrote to you, my friend, and implored your advice. But you were far away; your delighted soul was absorbed in cherishing the plant of human liberty, which has since blossomed with independent splendour over your happy provinces. Eagerly did I wait for the arrival of the packet, but no answer was returned. In the anguish of my soul, I once more addressed the prince of Wales; I complained, perhaps too vehemently, of his injustice; of the calumnies which had been by my enemies fabricated against me, of the falsehood of which he was but too sensible. I conjured him to render me justice, He did so; he wrote me a most eloquent letter, disclaiming the causes alleged by a calumniating world, and fully acquitting me of the charges which had been propagated to destroy me.

“ I resided now in Cork street, Burlington gardens. The house, which was neat, but by no means splendid, had recently been fitted up for the reception of the countess of Derby, on her separation from her lord.

My situation now every hour became more irksome. The prince still unkindly persisted in withdrawing himself from my society. I was now deeply involved in debt, which I despaired of ever having the power to discharge. I had quitted both my husband and my profession:—the retrospect was dreadful!

“My estrangement from the prince was now the theme of public animadversion, while the newly invigorated shafts of my old enemies, the daily prints, were again hurled upon my defenceless head with tenfold fury.—The regrets of Mr Robinson, now that he had *lost* me, became insupportable;—he constantly wrote to me in the language of unbounded affection; nor did he fail, when we met, to express his agony at our separation, and even a wish for our reunion.

“I had, at one period, resolved on returning to my profession; but some friends whom I consulted, dreaded that the public would not suffer my re-appearance on the stage. This idea intimidated me, and precluded my efforts for that independence of which my romantic credulity had robbed me. I was thus fatally induced to relinquish what would have proved an ample and honourable resource for myself and my child. My debts accumulated to near seven thousand pounds. My creditors, whose insulting illiberality could only be equalled by their unbounded impositions, hourly assailed me.

“I was, in the meantime, wholly neglected by the prince, while the assiduities of lord Malden daily increased. I had no other friend on whom I could rely for assistance or protection. When I say protection, I would not be understood to mean *pecuniary* assistance; lord Malden being, at the time alluded to, even poorer than myself: the death of his lordship’s grandmother, lady Frances Coningsby, had not then placed him above the penury of his own small income.

“Lord Malden’s attentions to me again exposed him to all the humiliation of former periods. The

prince assured me once more of his wishes to renew our former friendship and affection, and urged me to meet him at the house of lord Malden in Clarges street. I was at this period little less than frantic, deeply involved in debt, persecuted by my enemies, and perpetually reproached by my relations. I would joyfully have resigned an existence now become to me an intolerable burthen; yet my pride was not less than my sorrow, and I resolved, whatever my heart might suffer, to wear a placid countenance when I met the inquiring glances of my triumphant enemies.

“After much hesitation, by the advice of lord Malden, I consented to meet his royal highness. He accosted me with every appearance of tender attachment, declaring that he had never for one moment ceased to love me—but, that I had many concealed enemies, who were exerting every effort to undermine me. We passed some hours in the most friendly and delightful conversation, and I began to flatter myself that all our differences were adjusted.—But what words can express my surprise and chagrin, when, on meeting his royal highness *the very next day* in Hyde park, he turned his head to avoid seeing me, and even affected *not to know me*!

“Overwhelmed by this blow, my distress knew no limits. Yet *heaven* can witness the truth of my assertion, even in this moment of complete despair, when oppression bowed me to the earth, I blamed not the prince. I did then, and ever shall, consider his mind as nobly and honourably organized; nor could I teach myself to believe, that a heart, the seat of so many virtues, could possibly become inhuman and unjust. I had been taught from my infancy to believe that elevated stations are surrounded by delusive visions, which glitter but to dazzle, like an unsubstantial meteor, and flatter to betray. With legions of these phantoms it has been my fate to encounter; I have been unceasingly marked by their

persecutions, and shall at length become their victim."

Here the narrative of Mrs Robinson breaks off, with some reflections to which the recital had given rise. Though diligent search has been made to elucidate the obscurity in which the preceding events are involved, but little information has been gained. All that can be learned with certainty is her final separation from the prince of Wales in the year 1781.

The genius and engaging manners of Mrs Robinson, who was still very young, had procured her the friendship of many of the most enlightened men of this age and country: her house was the rendezvous of talents. While yet unconscious of the powers of her mind, which had scarcely then unfolded itself, she was honoured with the acquaintance and esteem of sir Joshua Reynolds, Messrs Sheridan, Burke, Henderson, Wilkes, sir John Elliot, &c. men of distinguished talents and character. But though surrounded by the wise, the witty, and the gay, her mind, naturally pensive, was still devoured by secret sorrow; neither could the blandishments of flattery, nor the soothings of friendship, extract the arrow that rankled in her heart. Involved beyond the power of extrication, she determined on quitting England, and making a tour to Paris.

To desert her country, to fly like a wretched fugitive, or to become a victim to the malice, and swell the triumph of her enemies, were the only alternatives that seemed to present themselves. Flight was humiliating and dreadful; but to remain in England was impracticable. The terrors and struggles of her mind became almost intolerable, and nearly deprived her of reason. The establishment of the prince had now taken place: to him, for whom she had made every sacrifice, and to whom she owed her present embarrassments, she conceived herself entitled to appeal for redress. She wrote to his royal highness, but her letter remained unanswered. The

business was at length submitted to the arbitration of Mr Fox, and, in 1783, her claims were adjusted by the grant of an annuity of five hundred pounds: the moiety of which was to descend to her daughter at her decease. This settlement was to be considered as an equivalent for the bond of twenty thousand pounds, given by the prince to Mrs Robinson, to be paid on his establishment, as a consideration for the *resignation of a lucrative profession at the particular request of his royal highness*. To many persons, the assurance of an independence would have operated as a consolation for the sufferings and difficulties by which it had been procured; but the spirit of Mrs Robinson bent not to a situation, which the delicacy of her feelings led her to consider as a splendid degradation.

About this period Mrs Robinson, notwithstanding the change in her affairs, determined to visit Paris, to amuse her mind and beguile her thoughts from the recollection of past scenes. Having procured letters of introduction to some agreeable French families, and also to sir John Lambert, resident English banker at Paris, she quitted London, with the resolution of passing two months in the gay and brilliant metropolis of France. Sir John Lambert, on being informed of her arrival, exerted himself to procure for her commodious apartments, a *remise*, a box at the opera, with all the fashionable and expensive et ceteras with which an inexperienced English traveller is immediately provided.

This venerable *chevalier* united to the cordiality of the English character the *bienfaisance* of a Frenchman: every hour was devoted to the amusement of his admired guest, who came to him highly recommended. Parties were, with the most flattering assiduity, formed for the different *spectacles* and places of public entertainment. A brilliant assemblage of illustrious visitors failed not to grace at the opera the box of *la belle Anglaise*.

A short time after the arrival of Mrs Robinson at Paris, the duke of Orleans and his gallant friend and associate, the duke de Lauzun (afterwards duke de Biron) were presented to her by sir John Lambert. This unfortunate prince, with all the volatility of the national character, disgraced human nature by his vices, while the elegance of his manners rendered him a model to his contemporaries.

The duke of Orleans immediately professed himself devoted to the fair stranger. His libertine manners, the presumption with which he declared his determination to triumph over the heart of Mrs Robinson, assisted to defend her against him; and, while he failed to dazzle her imagination by his magnificence, he disgusted her by his *hauteur*.

The most enchanting *fêtes* were given at Mousseau, a villa belonging to the duke of Orleans near Paris, at which Mrs Robinson invariably declined to appear. Brilliant races à l'Anglaise were exhibited on the plains des Sablons, to captivate the attention of the inexorable Anglaise. On the birth-day of Mrs Robinson, a new effort was made to subdue her aversion and to obtain her regard. A rural *fête* was appointed in the gardens of Mousseau, when this beautiful *Pandæmonium* of splendid profligacy, was, at an unusual expense, decorated with boundless luxury.

In the evening, amidst a magnificent illumination, every tree displayed the initials of *la belle Anglaise*, composed of coloured lamps, interwoven with wreaths of artificial flowers. Politeness compelled Mrs Robinson to grace with her presence a *fête* instituted to her honour. She however took the precaution of selecting for her companion a German lady, then resident at Paris, while the venerable chevalier Lambert attended them as a *chaperon*.

Some days after the celebration of this festival, the queen of France signified her intention of dining in public, for the first time after her *accouchement* with the duke of Normandy, afterwards Dauphin. The

duke brought to Mrs Robinson a message from the queen, expressing a wish that *la belle Anglaise* might be induced to appear at the *grand couvert*. Mrs Robinson, not less solicitous to behold the lovely Marie Antoinette, gladly availed herself of the intimation, and immediately began to prepare for the important occasion. The most tasteful ornaments of mademoiselle Bertin, the reigning milliner, were procured to adorn a form that, rich in native beauty, needed little embellishment. A pale green lustring train and body, with a tiffany petticoat, festooned with bunches of the most delicate lilac, were chosen by Mrs Robinson for her appearance, while a plume of white feathers adorned her head: the native roses of her cheeks, glowing with health and youth, were stained, in conformity to the fashion of the French court, with the deepest *rouge*.

On the arrival of the fair foreigner, the duke d'Orleans quitted the *king* on whom he was then in waiting, to procure her a place, where the queen might have an opportunity of observing those charms, by the fame of which her curiosity had been awakened.

The *grand couvert*, at which the king acquitted himself with more alacrity than grace, afforded a magnificent display of epicurean luxury. The queen eat nothing. The slender crimson cord, which drew a line of separation between the royal epicures and the gazing plebeians, was at the distance but of a few feet from the table. A small space divided the queen from Mrs Robinson, whom the constant observation and loudly whispered encomiums of her majesty most oppressively flattered. She appeared to survey, with peculiar attention, a miniature of the prince of Wales, which Mrs Robinson wore on her bosom, and of which, on the ensuing day, she commissioned the duke of Orleans to request the loan. Perceiving Mrs Robinson gaze with admiration on her white and polished arms, as she drew on her gloves, the queen again uncovered them, and leaned for a few moments

on her hand. The duke, on returning the picture, gave to the fair owner a purse, netted by the hand of Antoinette, and which she had commissioned him to present, from her, to *la belle Anglaise*. Mrs Robinson not long after these events quitted Paris, and returned to her native country.

In 1784 her fate assumed a darker hue: she was attacked by a malady, to which she had nearly fallen a victim. By an imprudent exposure to the night air in travelling, when exhausted by fatigue and mental anxiety, she slept in a chaise with the windows open, she brought on a fever, which confined her to her bed during six months. The disorder terminated, at the conclusion of that period, *in a violent rheumatism, which progressively deprived her of the use of her limbs*. Thus, at four-and-twenty years of age, in the pride of youth and the bloom of beauty, was this lovely and unfortunate woman reduced to a state of more than infantile helplessness. Yet, even under so severe a calamity, the powers of her mind, and the elasticity of her spirits, triumphed over the weakness of her frame. This check to the pleasures and vivacity of youth, by depriving her of external resource, led her to the more assiduous cultivation and development of her talents. But the resignation with which she had submitted to one of the severest of human calamities, gave place to hope, on the assurance of her physician, that by the mild air of a more southern climate she might probably be restored to health and activity.

The favourite wish of her heart, that of beholding her relations, from whom she had been so many years divided, it was now in her power to gratify. From her elder brother she had frequently received invitations, the most pressing and affectionate, to quit for ever a country, where an unprotected woman rarely fails to become the victim of calumny and persecution, and to take shelter in the bosom of domestic tranquillity, where peace, to which she had long been a stranger, might still await her. Delighted

with the idea of combining with the object of her travels an acquisition so desirable, and after which her exhausted heart panted, she eagerly embraced the proposal, and set out to Paris, with the resolution of proceeding to Leghorn. But a letter, on her arrival, from her physician, prescribing the warm baths of Aix la Chapelle in Germany, as a certain restorative for her complaints, frustrated her plans. Once more she proceeded in melancholy pursuit of that blessing which she was destined never more to obtain.

During her sojourn at Aix la Chapelle, a dawn of comparative tranquillity soothed in her spirits. Secure from the machinations of her enemies, she determined, though happiness seemed no more within her reach, to endeavour to be content. The assiduities and attentions shown her by all ranks of people presented a striking medium between the volatility and libertine homage offered to her at Paris, and the persevering malignity which had followed her in her native land. Her beauty, the affecting state of her health, the attraction of her manners, and the powers of her mind, interested every heart in her favour; while the meekness with which she submitted to her fate excited an admiration not less fervent, and more genuine, than her charms in the full blaze of their power had ever extorted.

Among the many illustrious and enlightened persons, then resident at Aix la Chapelle, who honoured Mrs Robinson by their friendship, she received from the late amiable and unfortunate duke and duchess du Châtelet, peculiar marks of distinction. The duke had, while ambassador in England, been the friend and associate of the learned lord Mansfield: his duchess, the *Elève* of Voltaire, claimed as her god-mother Gabrielle Emilia, baroness du Châtelet, so celebrated by that lively and admirable writer. This inestimable family, consisting of the duke and duchess, their nephews the counts de Damas, and a niece married to the duke de Simianne, were indefatigable in

their efforts to solace the affliction, and amuse the mind of their fair friend. Balls, concerts, rural breakfasts, succeeded to each other in gay and attractive variety: the happy effects produced on the health and spirits of Mrs Robinson, were considered by this English family as an ample compensation for their solicitude. When compelled by severer paroxysms of her malady to seclude herself from their society, a thousand kind stratagems were planned and executed to relieve her sufferings, or soften the dejection to which they unavoidably gave rise. Sometimes, on entering her dark and melancholy bath, the gloom of which was increased by high grated windows, she beheld the surface of the water covered with rose-leaves, while the vapour baths were impregnated with aromatic odours. The younger part of the family, when pain deprived Mrs Robinson of rest, frequently passed the night beneath her windows, charming her sufferings and beguiling her of her sorrows, by singing her favourite airs to the accompaniment of the mandolin.

Thus, in despite of sickness, glided away two agreeable winters, when the transient gleam of brightness became suddenly obscured, and her prospects involved in deeper shade.

About this period Mrs Robinson had the misfortune to lose her brave and respected father, a blow as forcible as unexpected, which nearly shook her faculties, and, for a time, wholly overwhelmed her spirits. Captain Darby had, on the failure of his fortunes, been presented to the command of a small ordnance vessel, through the interest of some of his noble associates in the Indian expedition. Not having been regularly bred to the sea, this was the only naval appointment which he could receive. Enthusiastically attached to his profession, he omitted no occasion of signalizing himself. The siege of Gibraltar, in the year 1783, afforded to him an opportunity after which he had long panted, when his small vessel

and gallant crew extorted by their courage and exertions, the admiration and applause of the fleet. Having fought till his rigging was nearly destroyed, he turned his attention to the sinking Spaniards, whom he sought to snatch from the flaming wrecks, floating around him in all directions, and had the satisfaction to preserve, though at the hazard of his life, some hundreds of his fellow beings. The vessel of captain Darby was the first that reached the rock by nearly an hour. On his landing, general Elliot received and embraced him with the plaudits due to his gallant conduct.

In the presence of his officers, the general lamented, that so brave a man had not been bred to a profession, to which his intrepidity would have done distinguished honour. To this eulogium he added, that, with the courage of a lion, captain Darby possessed the firmness of the rock which he had so bravely defended.

To his care was intrusted by the commander a *copy* of the dispatches, which captain Darby delivered four-and-twenty hours *before the arrival* of the regular vessel. For this diligence, and the conduct which had preceded it, he received the THANKS of the board of Admiralty, while on the other captain was bestowed the more substantial recompense of five hundred pounds. An injustice so glaring was not calculated to lessen captain Darby's distaste for England, which he quitted, after taking of his unhappy family an affectionate farewell.

At sixty-two years of age, he set out to regain in a foreign country the fortune he had sacrificed in the service of his own. With powerful recommendations from the duke of Dorset and the count de Simolin, he proceeded to Petersburg. From the count de Simolin he continued to experience, till the latest period of his existence, a steady and zealous friendship. Captain Darby had been but two years in the Russian imperial service, when he was pro-

moted to the command of a seventy-four gun ship, with a promise of the appointment of admiral on the first vacancy. On the fifth day of December 1785, death put a stop to his career. He was buried with military honours, and attended to the grave by his friends admiral Greig, the counts Czernichef and de Simolin, with the officers of the fleet.*

• The most affecting tribute which the memory of a gallant father could receive, was the following pathetic and heart-felt effusion of genuine and grateful duty.

TO THE
MEMORY

OF

MY LAMENTED FATHER,

WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA,
DECEMBER 5, 1786.

“ Oh, sire, rever'd! ador'd!
Was it the ruthless tongue of DEATH,
That whisp'ring to my pensive ear,
Pronounc'd the fatal word;
That bath'd my cheek with many a tear,
And stop'd awhile, my grasping breath?
' He lives no more!
Far on a foreign shore,
His honour'd dust a laurel'd grave receives,
While his immortal soul in realms celestial, lives!”

“ Oh! my lov'd sire, farewell!
Though we are doom'd on earth to meet no more,
Still mem'ry lives, and still I must adore!
And long this throbbing heart shall mourn,
Though thou to these sad eyes wilt ne'er return!
Yet shall remembrance dwell
On all thy sorrows through life's stormy sea,
When fate's resistless whirlwinds shed
Unnumber'd tempests round thy head,
The varying ills of human destiny!”

This honourable testimony to her father's worth,
was the only consolation remaining to his daughter,

Yet, with a soul sublimely brave,
Didst thou endure the dashing wave ;
Still buffeting the billows rude,
By all the shafts of woe, undaunted, unsubdued !

Through a long life of rugged care,
'Twas thine to steer a steady course !
'Twas thine misfortune's frowns to bear,
And stem the wayward torrent's force !

And as thy persevering mind
The toilsome path of fame pursued,
'Twas thine, amidst its flow'rs to find
The wily snake—Ingratitude !

Yet vainly did th' insidious reptile strive
On thee its poisons dire to fling ;
Above its reach, thy laurel still shall thrive,
Unconscious of the treach'rous sting !

'Twas thine to toil through length'ning years,
Where low'ring night absorbs the spheres !
O'er icy seas to bend thy way,
Where frozen Greenland rears its head,
Where dusky vapours shroud the day,
And wastes of flaky snow, the stagnate ocean spread.

'Twas thine, amidst the smoke of war,
To view, unmov'd, grim-fronted death ;
Where fate, enthron'd in sulphur'd car,
Shrunk the pale legions with her scorching breath !

While all around her bath'd in blood,
Iberia's haughty sons, plung'd lifeless, midst the flood

Now on the wings of meditation borne,
Let fond remembrance turn, and turn to mourn ;
Slowly, and sad, her pinions sweep
O'er the rough bosom of the boist'rous deep
To that disastrous, fatal coast,
Where, on the foaming billows tost,
Imperial Catherine's navies rode ;
And war's inviting banners wide,
Wav'd hostile o'er the glitt'ring tide,
That with exulting conquest glow'd !

whose enfeebled health and broken spirits sunk beneath these repeated strokes.

During the four succeeding years of the life of Mrs Robinson, but few events occurred worthy of remark. In search of lost health, which she had so long and vainly pursued, she determined to repair to the baths of St Amand in Flanders, those receptacles of loathsome mud, and of reptiles, unknown to other soils,

For there, oh sorrow, check the tear !
 There, round departed valour's bier,
 The sacred drops of kindred virtue* shone !
 Proud monuments of worth ! whose base
 Fame on her starry hill shall place ;
 There to endure, admir'd, sublime !
 E'en when the mould'ring wing of time
 Shall scatter to the winds, huge pyramids of stone !
 Oh ! gallant soul ! farewell !
 Though doom'd this transient orb to leave,
 Thy daughter's heart, whose grief no words can tell,
 Shall, in its throbbing centre, bid thee live !
 While from its crimson fount shall flow
 The silent tear of ling'ring grief ;
 The gem sublime ! that scorns relief,
 Nor vaunting shines, with ostentatious woe !

Though thou art vanish'd from these eyes,
 Still from thy sacred dust shall rise
 A wreath that mocks the polish'd grace
 Of sculptur'd bust, or tuneful praise ;
 While fame shall weeping point the place
 Where valour's dauntless son decays !
 Unseen to cherish mem'ry's source divine,
 Oh ! parent of my life, shall still be mine !

And thou shalt, from thy blissful state,
 Awhile avert thy raptur'd gaze,
 To own, that 'midst this wild'ring maze,
 The flame of filial love defies the blast of fate !

* Captain Darby commanded, at the time of his death, a ship of war in the Russian service, and was buried with military honours, universally lamented.

which fasten on the bodies of those who bathe. Mrs Robinson made many visits to these distasteful ditches, before she could prevail on herself to enter them. Neither the example of her fellow sufferers, nor the assurance of cures performed by their wonderful efficacy, could for a long time overcome her disgust. At length, solicitude for the restoration of her health, added to the earnest remonstrances of her friends, determined her on making the effort. For the purpose of being near the baths, which must be entered an hour before the rising of the sun, she hired a small but beautiful cottage near the spring, where she passed the summer of 1787. These peaceful vales and venerable woods were, at no distant period, destined to become the seat of war and devastation, and the very cottage in which Mrs Robinson resided was converted into the head quarters of a republican French general.*

Every endeavour to subdue her disorder proving ineffectual, Mrs Robinson relinquished her melancholy and fruitless pursuit, and resolved once more to return to her native land. Proceeding through Paris, she reached England in the beginning of 1787, from which period may be dated the commencement of her literary career. On her arrival in London, she was affectionately received by the few friends whose attachment neither detraction nor adverse fortunes could weaken or estrange. During an absence of five years, death had made inroads in the little circle of her connections : many of those whose idea had been her solace in affliction, and whose welcome she had delighted to anticipate, were now, alas ! no more.†

* Dumouriez.

† An attachment took place between Mrs Robinson and colonel Tarleton shortly after the return of the latter from America, which subsisted during sixteen years. On the circumstances which occasioned its dissolution, it is neither necessary, nor would it be proper to dwell. The exertions of Mrs Robinson in the service of colonel Tarleton, when

Once more established in London, and surrounded by social and rational friends, Mrs Robinson began to experience comparative tranquillity. The prince of Wales, with his brother the duke of York, frequently honoured her residence with their presence: but the state of her health, which required more repose, added to the indisposition of her daughter, who was threatened by a consumptive disorder, obliged her to withdraw to a situation of greater retirement. Maternal solicitude for a beloved and only child now wholly engaged her attention: her assiduities were incessant and exemplary for the restoration of a being to whom she had given life, and to whom she was fondly devoted.

In the course of the summer she was ordered by her physician to Brighthelmstone, for the benefit of sea bathing. During hours of tedious watching over the health of her suffering child, Mrs Robinson beguiled her anxiety by contemplating the ocean, whose successive waves, breaking upon the shore, beat against the wall of their little garden. To a mind naturally susceptible, and tinctured by circumstances with sadness, this occupation afforded a melancholy pleasure, which could scarcely be relinquished without regret. Whole nights were passed by Mrs Robinson at her window, in deep meditation, contrasting with her present situation the scenes of her former life.

Every device which a kind and skilful nurse could invent to cheer and amuse her charge, was practised by this affectionate mother, during the melancholy period of her daughter's confinement. In the intervals of more active exertion, the silence of a sick chamber proving favourable to the muse, Mrs Robin-

pressed by pecuniary embarrassment, led to that unfortunate journey, the consequences of which proved so fatal to her health. The colonel accompanied her to the continent, and, by his affectionate attentions, sought to alleviate those sufferings of which he had been the involuntary occasion.

son poured forth those poetic effusions, which have done so much honour to her genius, and decked her tomb with unfading laurels. Conversing one evening with Mr Richard Burke,* respecting the facility with which modern poetry was composed, Mrs Robinson repeated nearly the whole of those beautiful lines, which were afterwards given to the public, addressed —“ *To him who will understand them.*”

LINES

TO HIM WHO WILL UNDERSTAND THEM.

THOU art no more my bosom's friend ;
 Here must the sweet delusion end,
 That charmed my senses many a year,
 Through smiling summers, winters drear.—
 O, friendship ! am I doom'd to find
 Thou art a phantom of the mind ?
 A glitt'ring shade, an empty name,
 An air-born vision's vap'rish flame ?
 And yet, the dear deceit so long
 Has wak'd to joy my matin song,
 Has bid my tears forget to flow,
 Chas'd ev'ry pain, sooth'd ev'ry woe ;
 That truth, unwelcome to my ear,
 Swells the deep sigh, recalls the tear,
 Gives to the sense the keenest smart,
 Checks the warm pulses of the heart,
 Darkens my fate, and steals away
 Each gleam of joy through life's sad day.

Britain, farewell ! I quit thy shore :
 My native country charms no more ;
 No guide to mark the toilsome road ;
 No destin'd clime ; no fix'd abode :
 Alone and sad, ordain'd to trace
 The vast expanse of endless space ;
 To view, upon the mountain's height,
 Through varied shades of glimm'ring light,

* Son of the celebrated Edmund Burke

The distant landscape fade away
In the last gleam of parting day :
Or, on the quiv'ring lucid stream,
To watch the pale moon's silv'ry beam ;
Or when, in sad and plaintive strains
The mournful Philomel complains,
In dulcet notes bewails her fate,
And murmurs for her absent mate ;
Inspir'd by sympathy divine,
I'll weep her woes—for they are mine.
Driv'n by my fate, where'er I go,
O'er burning plains, o'er hills of snow,
Or on the bosom of the wave
The howling tempest doom'd to brave,—
Where'er my lonely course I bend,
Thy image shall my steps attend ;
Each object I am doom'd to see,
Shall bid remembrance picture thee.
Yes ; I shall view thee in each flow'r,
That changes with the transient hour :
Thy wand'ring fancy I shall find
Borne on the wings of every wind :
Thy wild impetuous passions trace
O'er the white waves' tempestuous space :
In every changing season prove
An emblem of thy wav'ring love.

Torn from my country, friends, and you,
The world lies open to my view ;
New objects shall my mind engage ;
I will explore th' historic page ;
Sweet poetry shall soothe my soul ;
Philosophy each pang controul :
The muse I'll seek—her iambent fire
My soul's quick senses shall inspire ;
With finer nerves my heart shall beat,
Touch'd by heav'n's own Promethean heat ;
Italia's gales shall bear my song
In soft-link'd notes her woods among ;
Upon the blue hill's misty side,
Thro' trackless deserts waste and wide,
O'er craggy rocks, whose torrents flow
Upon the silver sands below.

Sweet land of melody ! 'tis thine
The softest passions to refine ;
Thy myrtle groves, thy melting strains,
Shall harmonize and soothe my pains.
Nor will I cast one thought behind,
On foes relentless, friends unkind :
I feel, I feel their poison'd dart
Pierce the life-nerve within my heart ;
'Tis mingled with the vital heat
That bids my throbbing pulses beat ;
Soon shall that vital heat be o'er,
Those throbbing pulses beat no more !
No—I will breathe the spicy gale ;
Plunge the clear stream, new health exhale ;
O'er my pale cheek diffuse the rose,
And drink oblivion to my woes.

This *improvisatore* produced in her auditor not less surprise than admiration, when solemnly assured by its author, that this was the first time of its being repeated. Mr Burke entreated her to commit the poem to writing, a request which was readily complied with. Mrs Robinson had afterwards the gratification of finding this offspring of her genius inserted in the Annual Register, with a flattering encomium from the pen of the eloquent and ingenious editor.

Mrs Robinson continued to indulge in this solace for her dejected spirits, and in sonnets, elegies, and odes, displayed the powers and versatility of her mind. On one of these nights of melancholy inspiration, she discovered from her window a small boat, struggling in the spray, which dashed against the wall of her garden. Presently two fishermen brought on shore in their arms a burthen, which, notwithstanding the distance, Mrs Robinson perceived to be a human body, which the fishermen, after covering with a sail from their boat, left on the land and disappeared. But a short time elapsed before the men returned, bringing with them fuel, with which they

* The right honourable Edmund Burke, at that time conductor of the Annual Register.

vainly endeavoured to reanimate their unfortunate charge. Struck with a circumstance so affecting, which the stillness of the night rendered yet more impressive, Mrs Robinson remained some time at her window motionless with horror. At length, recovering her recollection, she alarmed the family; but before they could gain the beach, the men had again departed. The morning dawned, and day broke in upon the tragical scene. The bathers passed and repassed with little concern, while the corpse continued extended on the shore, not twenty yards from the Steine. During the course of the day, many persons came to look on the body, which still remained unclaimed and unknown. Another day wore away and the corpse was unburied, the lord of the manor having refused to a fellow being a grave in which his bones might decently repose, alleging as an excuse, *that he did not belong to that parish*. Mrs Robinson, humanely indignant at the scene which passed, exerted herself, but without success, to procure by subscription a small sum for performing the last duties to a wretched outcast. Unwilling, by an ostentatious display of her name, to offend the higher and more fastidious female powers, she presented to the fishermen her own contribution, and declined farther to interfere. The affair dropped; and the body of the stranger being dragged to the cliff, was covered by a heap of stones, without the tribute of a sigh or the ceremony of a prayer.

These circumstances made on the mind of Mrs Robinson a deep and lasting impression; even at a distant period she could not repeat them without horror and indignation. This incident gave rise to the poem entitled 'The Haunted Beach,' written but a few months before her death.

In the winter of 1790, Mrs Robinson entered into a poetical correspondence with Mr Robert Merry, under the fictitious names of "Laura," and "Laura

Maria;" Mr Merry assuming the title of "Della Crusca."*

Mrs Robinson now proceeded in her literary career with redoubled ardour; but, dazzled by the false metaphors and rhapsodical extravagance of some contemporary writers, she suffered her judgment to be misled and her taste to be perverted: an error of which she became afterwards sensible. During her poetical disguise, many complimentary poems were addressed to her: several ladies of the *Blue Stocking* club, while Mrs Robinson remained unknown, even ventured to admire, nay more, to recite her productions in their learned and critical *coterie*.

The attention which this novel species of correspondence excited, and the encomiums which were passed on her poems, could not fail to gratify the pride of the writer, who sent her next performance, with her own signature, to the paper published under the title of "The World," avowing herself at the same time the author of the lines signed "Laura," and "Laura Maria." This information being received by Mr Bell, though a professed admirer of the genius of Mrs Robinson, with some degree of scepticism he replied, "That the poem with which Mrs Robinson had honoured him was *vastly pretty*; but that he was well acquainted with the author of the productions alluded to." Mrs Robinson, a little disgusted at this incredulity, immediately sent for Mr Bell, whom she found means to convince of her veracity, and of his own injustice.

In 1791, Mrs Robinson produced her quarto poem, entitled "Ainsi va le Monde." This work, containing three hundred and fifty lines, was written in twelve hours, as a reply to Mr Merry's "Laurel of Liberty," which was sent to Mrs Robinson on a Sa-

* Mr Merry had been a member of the "Scuola della Crusca," at Florence.

turday; on the *Tuesday following* the answer was composed and given to the public.

Encouraged by popular approbation beyond her most sanguine hopes, Mrs Robinson now published her first essay in prose, in the romance of *Vancenza*, of which the whole edition was *sold in one day*, and of which five impressions have since followed. It must be confessed, that this production owed its popularity to the celebrity of the author's name, and the favourable impression of her talents given to the public by her poetical compositions, rather than to its intrinsic merit. In the same year, the poems of Mrs Robinson were collected and published in one volume. The names of nearly six hundred subscribers, of the most distinguished rank and talents, graced the list which precedes the work.

The mind of Mrs Robinson, beguiled by these pursuits from preying upon itself, became gradually reconciled to the calamitous state of her health: the mournful certainty of total and incurable lameness, while yet in the bloom and summer of life, was alleviated by the consciousness of intellectual resource, and by the activity of a fertile fancy. In 1791, she passed the greater part of the summer at Bath, occupied in lighter poetical compositions. But even from this relief she was now for a while debarred: the perpetual exercise of the imagination and intellect, added to a uniform and sedentary life, affected the system of her nerves, and contributed to debilitate her frame. She was prohibited by her physician, not merely from committing her thoughts to paper, but, had it been possible, from thinking at all: no truant, escaped from school, could receive more pleasure in eluding a severe master, than did Mrs Robinson, when, the vigilance of her physician relaxing, she could once more resume her books and her pen.

As an example of the facility and rapidity with which she composed, the following anecdote may be given. Returning one evening from the bath, she

beheld, a few paces before her chair, an elderly man, hurried along by a crowd of people, by whom he was pelted with mud and stones. His meek and unresisting deportment exciting her attention, she inquired what were his offences, and learned with pity and surprise, that he was an unfortunate maniac, known only by the appellation of "*mad Jemmy*." The situation of this miserable being seized her imagination and became the subject of her attention: she would wait whole hours for the appearance of the poor maniac, and, whatever were her occupations, the voice of *mad Jemmy* was sure to allure her to the window. She would gaze upon his venerable but emaciated countenance with sensations of awe almost reverential, while the barbarous persecutions of the thoughtless crowd never failed to agonize her feelings.

One night after bathing, having suffered from her disorder more than usual pain, she swallowed, by order of her physician, near eighty drops of laudanum. Having slept for some hours, she awoke, and calling her daughter, desired her to take a pen and write what she should dictate. Miss Robinson, supposing that a request so unusual might proceed from the delirium excited by the opium, endeavoured in vain to dissuade her mother from her purpose. The spirit of inspiration was not to be subdued, and she repeated, throughout, the admirable poem of *The Maniac*,* much faster than it could be committed to paper.

She lay, while dictating, with her eyes closed, apparently in the stupor which opium frequently produces, repeating like a person talking in her sleep. This affecting performance, produced in circumstances so singular, does no less credit to the genius than to the heart of the author.

On the ensuing morning, Mrs Robinson had only a confused idea of what had passed, nor could be con-

* Mrs Robinson's Poems, vol. ii. p. 27.

vinced of the fact till the manuscript was produced. She declared, that she had been dreaming of mad Jemmy throughout the night, but was perfectly unconscious of having been awake while she composed the poem, or of the circumstances narrated by her daughter.

Mrs Robinson, in the following summer, determined on another continental tour, purposing to remain some time at Spa. She longed once more to experience the friendly greeting and liberal kindness, which even her acknowledged talents had in her native country failed to procure. She quitted London in July 1792, accompanied by her mother and daughter. The susceptible and energetic mind, fortunately for its possessor, is endowed with an elastic power, that enables it to rise again from the benumbing effects of those adverse strokes of fortune, to which it is but too vulnerable. If a lively imagination add poignancy to disappointment, it also has in itself resources unknown to more equal temperaments. In the midst of the depressing feelings which Mrs Robinson experienced in once more becoming a wanderer from her home, she courted the inspiration of the muse, and soothed, by the following beautiful stanzas, the melancholy sensations that oppressed her heart.

STANZAS

WRITTEN BETWEEN DOVER AND CALAIS,
JULY 20TH, 1792.

BOUNDING billow, cease thy motion,
Bear me not so swiftly o'er;
Cease thy roaring, foamy ocean,
I will tempt thy rage no more.

Ah! within my bosom beating,
Varying passions wildly reign;
Love, with proud Resentment meeting,
Throbs by turns, of joy and pain.

Joy, that far from foes I wander,
Where their taunts can reach no more;
Pain, that woman's heart grows fonder
When her dream of bliss is o'er!

Love, by fickle fancy banish'd,
Spurn'd by hope, indignant flies;
Yet, when love and hope are vanish'd,
Restless mem'ry never dies.

Far I go, where fate shall lead me,
Far across the troubled deep;
Where no stranger's ear shall heed me,
Where no eye for me shall weep.

Proud has been my fatal passion!
Proud my injured heart shall be!
While each thought, each inclination,
Still shall prove me worthy *thee*!

Not one sigh shall tell my story;
Not one tear my cheek shall stain;
Silent grief shall be my glory,—
Grief, that stoops not to complain!

Let the bosom prone to ranging,
Still by ranging seek a cure;
Mine disdains the thought of changing,
Proudly destin'd to endure.

Yet, ere far from all I treasur'd,
***** ere I bid adieu;
Ere my days of pain are measur'd,
Take the song that's still thy due!

Yet, believe, no servile passions
Seek to charm thy vagrant mind;
Well I know thy inclinations,
Wav'ring as the passing wind.

I have lov'd thee,—dearly lov'd thee,
Through an age of worldly woe;
How ungrateful I have prov'd thee
Let my mournful exile show!

Ten long years of anxious sorrow,
Hour by hour I counted o'er;

Looking forward, till tomorrow,
Every day I lov'd thee more !

Pow'r and splendour could not charm me ;
I no joy in wealth could see !
Nor could threats or fears alarm me,
Save the fear of losing thee !

When the storms of fortune press'd thee,
I have wept to see thee weep !
When relentless cares distress'd thee,
I have lull'd those cares to sleep !

When with *thee*, what ills could harm me ?
Thou couldst every pang assuage ;
But when absent, nought could charm me ;
Every moment seem'd an age.

Fare thee well, ungrateful rover !
Welcome Gallia's hostile shore :
Now the breezes waft me over ;
Now we part—TO MEET NO MORE.

ON landing at Calais, Mrs Robinson hesitated whether to proceed. To travel through Flanders, then the seat of war, threatened too many perils to be attempted with impunity ; she determined therefore for some time to remain at Calais, the insipid and spiritless amusements of which presented little either to divert her attention or engage her mind. Her time passed in listening to the complaints of the impoverished aristocrats, or in attending to the air-built projects of their triumphant adversaries. The arrival of travellers from England, or the return of those from Paris, alone diversified the scene, and afforded a resource to the curious and active inquirer.

The sudden arrival of her husband gave a turn to the feelings of Mrs Robinson : he had crossed the channel for the purpose of carrying back to England his daughter, whom he wished to present to a brother

newly returned from the East Indies. Maternal conflicts shook on this occasion the mind of Mrs Robinson, which hesitated between a concern for the interest of her beloved child, from whom she had never been separated, and the pain of parting from her. She resolved at length on accompanying her to England, and, with this view, quitted Calais on the memorable second of September 1792, a day which will reflect on the annals of the republic an indelible stain.

They had sailed but a few hours when the *arrêt* arrived, by which every British subject throughout France was restrained.

Mrs Robinson rejoiced in her escape, and anticipated with delight the idea of seeing her daughter placed in wealthy protection, the great passport in her own country to honour and esteem. Miss Robinson received from her new relation the promise of protection and favour, upon condition that she renounced for ever the filial tie which united her to *both* parents. This proposal was rejected by the young lady with proper principle and becoming spirit.

In the year 1793, a little farce, entitled ‘*Nobody*,’ was written by Mrs Robinson. This piece, designed as a satire on female gamesters, was received at the theatre, the characters distributed, and preparations made for its exhibition. At this period one of the principal performers gave up her part, alleging that the piece was intended as a ridicule on her particular friend. Another actress also, though in “herself a host,” was intimidated by a letter, informing her that “*Nobody* should be damned !” The author received likewise, on the same day, a scurrilous, indecent, and ill-disguised scrawl, signifying to her that the farce was already condemned. On the drawing up of the curtain, several persons in the galleries, whose liveries betrayed their employers, were heard to declare that they were sent to *do up* ‘*Nobody*.’ Even women of distinguished rank hissed through their fans. Notwithstanding these manœuvres and exertions, the

more rational part of the audience seemed inclined to hear before they passed judgment, and, with a firmness that never fails to awe, demanded that the piece should proceed. The first act was accordingly suffered without interruption: a song in the second being unfortunately encored, the malcontents once more ventured to raise their voices, and the malignity that had been forcibly suppressed, burst forth with redoubled violence. For three nights the theatre presented a scene of confusion, when the authoress, after experiencing the gratification of a zealous and sturdy defence, thought proper wholly to withdraw the cause of contention.

Mrs Robinson in the course of this year lost her only remaining parent, whom she tenderly loved and sincerely lamented. Mrs Darby expired in the house of her daughter, who, though by far the least wealthy of her children, had proved herself through life the most attentive and affectionate. From the first hour of Mr Darby's failure and estrangement from his family, Mrs Robinson had been the protector and the support of her mother: even when pressed herself by pecuniary embarrassment, it had been her pride and pleasure to shelter her widowed parent, and preserve her from inconvenience.

Mrs Darby had two sons, merchants, wealthy and respected in the commercial world; but to these gentlemen Mrs Robinson would never suffer her mother to apply for any assistance that was not voluntarily offered. The filial sorrow of Mrs Robinson on her loss for many months affected her health; even to the latest hour of her life, her grief appeared renewed, when any object presented itself connected with the memory of her departed mother.

Few events of importance occurred during the five following years; excepting that, through this period, the friends of Mrs Robinson observed with concern the gradual ravages which indisposition and mental anxiety were daily making upon her frame. An in-

genuous, affectionate, susceptible heart is seldom favourable to the happiness of the possessor. It was the fate of Mrs Robinson to be deceived where she most confided ; to experience treachery and ingratitude where she had a title to kindness, and a claim to support. Frank and unsuspecting, she suffered her conduct to be guided by the impulse of her feelings ; and, by a too credulous reliance on the apparent attachment of those whom she loved, and in whom she delighted to trust, she laid herself open to the impositions of the selfish, and the stratagems of the crafty.

In 1799, her increasing involvements and declining health pressed heavily upon her mind : she had voluntarily relinquished those comforts and elegancies to which she had been accustomed ; she had retrenched even her necessary expenses, and nearly secluded herself from society. Her physician had declared that by exercise only could her existence be prolonged ; yet the narrowness of her circumstances obliged her to forego the only means by which it could be obtained. Thus, a prisoner in her own house, she was deprived of every solace but that which could be obtained by the activity of her mind, which at length sank under excessive exertion and inquietude.

Indisposition had for nearly five weeks confined her to her bed, when, after a night of extreme suffering and peril, through which her physician hourly expected her dissolution, she had sunk into a gentle and balmy sleep. At this instant, her chamber door was forcibly pushed open, with a noise that shook her enfeebled frame nearly to annihilation, by two strange and ruffian-looking men, who entered with barbarous abruptness. On her faintly inquiring the occasion of this outrage, she was informed that one of her unwelcome visitors was an attorney, and the other his client, who had thus, with as little decency as humanity, forced themselves into the chamber of an almost expiring woman. The motive of this intrusion was to demand her appearance, as a witness, in

a suit pending against her brother, in which these men were parties concerned. No entreaties could prevail on them to quit the chamber, where they both remained, questioning, in a manner the most unfeeling and insulting, the unfortunate victim of their audacity and persecution. One of them, the client, with a barbarous and unmanly sneer, turning to his confederate, asked—"Who, to see the lady they were now speaking to, could believe that she had once been called the *beautiful* Mrs Robinson?" To this he added other observations not less savage and brutal; and, after throwing on the bed a subpœna, quitted the apartment. The wretch who could thus, by insulting the sick, and violating every law of humanity and common decency, disgrace the figure of a man, was a *professor* and a *priest* of that religion which enjoins us—"not to break the bruised reed," *'and to bind up the broken in heart!'* His name shall be suppressed, through respect to the order of which he is an unworthy member. The consequences of this brutality upon the poor invalid were violent convulsions, which had nearly extinguished the struggling spark of life.

By slow degrees, her malady yielded to the cares and skill of her medical attendants, and she was once more restored to temporary convalescence; but from that time her strength gradually decayed. Though her frame was shaken to its centre, her circumstances compelled her still to exert the faculties of her mind.

The sportive exercises of fancy were now converted into toilsome labours of the brain,—nights of sleepless anxiety were succeeded by days of vexation and dread.

About this period, she was induced to undertake the poetical department for the editor of a morning paper,* and actually commenced a series of satirical

odes, on local and temporary subjects, to which was affixed the signature of "Tabitha Bramble." Among these lighter compositions, considered by the author as unworthy of a place with her collected poems, a more matured production of her genius was occasionally introduced; of which the following 'Ode to Spring, written April 30, 1780,' is a beautiful and affecting example.

Life-glowing season! odour-breathing Spring!
Deck'd in cerulean splendours!—vivid,—warm,
Shedding soft lustre on the rosy hours,
And calling forth their beauties! balmy Spring!
To thee the vegetating world begins
To pay fresh homage. Ev'ry southern gale
Whispers thy coming;—every tepid show'r
Revivifies thy charms. The mountain breeze
Wafts the ethereal essence to the vale,
While the low vale returns its fragrant hoard
With tenfold sweetness. When the dawn unfolds
Its purple splendours 'mid the dappled clouds,
Thy influence cheers the soul. When noon uplifts
Its burning canopy, spreading the plain
Of heaven's own radiance with one vast of light,
Thou smil'st triumphant! Ev'ry little flow'r
Seems to exult in thee, delicious Spring,
Luxuriant nurse of nature! By the stream,
That winds its swift course down the mountain's side,
Thy progeny are seen;—young primroses,
And all the varying buds of wildest birth,
Dotting the green slope gaily. On the thorn,
Which arms the hedge-row, the young birds invite
With merry minstrelsy, shrilly and maz'd
With winding cadences; now quick, now sunk
In the low twitter'd song. The evening sky
Reddens the distant main; catching the sail,
Which slowly lessens, and with crimson hue
Varying the sea-green wave; while the young moon,
Scarce visible amid the warmer tints
Of western splendours, slowly lifts her brow
Modest and icy-lustred! O'er the plain
The light dews rise, sprinkling the thistle's head.

And hanging its clear drops on the wild waste
Of broomy fragrance. Season of delight !
Thou soul-expanding pow'r, whose wondrous glow
Can bid all nature smile ! Ah ! why to me
Come unregarded, undelighting still
This ever-mourning bosom ? So I've seen
The sweetest flow'rets bind the icy urn ;
The brightest sunbeams glitter on the grave ;
And the soft zephyr kiss the troubled main,
With whispered murmurs. Yes, to me, O Spring !
Thou com'st unwelcom'd by a smile of joy ;
To me ! slow with'ring to that silent grave
Where all is blank and dreary ! Yet once more
The Spring eternal of the soul shall dawn,
Unvisited by clouds, by storms, by change,
Radiant and unexhausted ! Then, ye buds,
Ye plummy minstrels, and ye balmy gales,
Adorn your little hour, and give your joys
To bless the fond world-loving traveller,
Who, smiling, measures the long flow'ry path
That leads to death ! For to such wanderers
Life is a busy, pleasing, cheerful dream,
And the last hour unwelcome. Not to me,
O ! not to me, stern death, art thou a foe ;
Thou art the welcome messenger, which brings -
A passport to a blest and long repose.

A just value was at that time set upon the exertions of Mrs Robinson by the conductors of the paper, who "considered them as one of the principal embellishments and supports of their journal."

In the spring of 1800, she was compelled by the daily encroachments of her malady wholly to relinquish her literary employments.

Her disorder was pronounced by the physicians to be a rapid decline. Dr Henry Vaughan, who to medical skill unites the most exalted philanthropy, prescribed, as a last resource, a journey to Bristol Wells. A desire once again to behold her native scenes, induced Mrs Robinson eagerly to accede to this proposal. She wept with melancholy pleasure at

the idea of closing her eyes for ever upon a world of vanity and disappointment, in the place in which she had first drawn breath, and terminating her sorrows on the spot which gave her birth ; but even this sad solace was denied to her from a want of the pecuniary means for its execution. In vain she applied to those on whom honour, humanity, and justice, gave her undoubted claims. She even condescended to entreat, as a *donation*, the return of those sums granted as a *loan* in her prosperity.

The following is a copy of a letter addressed on this occasion to a *noble* debtor, and found among the papers of Mrs Robinson after her decease.

TO *****

“ My Lord,

April 23, 1800.

“ Pronounced by my physicians to be in a rapid decline, I trust that your lordship will have the goodness to assist me with a part of the sum for which you are indebted to me. Without your aid I cannot make trial of the Bristol waters, the only remedy that presents to me any hope of preserving my existence. I should be sorry to die at enmity with any person ; and you may be assured, my dear lord, that I bear none towards you. It would be useless to ask you to call on me ; but if you would do me that honour, I should be happy, very happy, to see you, being,

“ My dear lord,

“ Yours truly,

“ MARY ROBINSON.”

To this letter no answer was returned!! Farther comments are unnecessary.

The last literary performance of Mrs Robinson was a volume of Lyrical Tales. She repaired a short time after to a small cottage *ornée*, belonging to her daughter, near Windsor. Rural occupation and

amusement, quiet and pure air, appeared for a time to cheer her spirits, and renovate her shattered frame. Once more her active mind returned to its accustomed and favourite pursuits; but the toil of supplying the constant variety required by a daily print, added to other engagements, which she almost despaired of being capacitated to fulfil, pressed heavily upon her spirits, and weighed down her enfeebled frame. Yet, in the month of August, she began and concluded, in the course of ten days, a translation of Dr Hager's 'Picture of Palermo;' an exertion by which she was greatly debilitated. She was compelled, though with reluctance, to relinquish the translation of 'The Messiah of Klopstock,' which she had proposed giving to the English reader in blank verse; a task particularly suited to her genius and the turn of her mind.

But, amidst the pressure of complicated distress, the mind of this unfortunate woman was superior to improper concessions, and treated with just indignation those offers of service which required the sacrifice of her integrity.

She yet continued, though with difficulty and many intervals, her literary avocations. When necessitated by pain and languor to limit her exertions, her unfeeling employers accused her of negligence. This inconsideration, though she seldom complained, affected her spirits, and preyed upon her heart. As she hourly declined towards that asylum where "the weary rest," her mind seemed to acquire strength in proportion to the weakness of her frame. When no longer able to support the fatigue of being removed from her chamber, she retained a perfect composure of spirits, and, in the intervals of extreme bodily suffering, would listen while her daughter read to her, with apparent interest and collectedness of thought, frequently making observations on what would probably take place when she had passed that "bourn whence no traveller returns." The flattering nature

of her disorder at times inspired her friends with the most sanguine hopes of her restoration to health ; she would even herself, at intervals, cherish the idea : but these gleams of hope, like flashes of lightning athwart the storm, were succeeded by a deeper gloom ; and the consciousness of her approaching fate returned upon the mind of the sufferer with increased conviction.

Within a few days of her decease, she collected and arranged her poetical works, which she bound her daughter, by a solemn adjuration, to publish for her subscribers, and also the present Memoir. Requesting earnestly that the papers prepared for the latter purpose might be brought to her, she gave them into the hands of Miss Robinson, with an injunction that the narrative should be made public ; adding, “ I should have continued it up to the present time,—but, perhaps, it is as well that I have been prevented. Promise me that you will print it ! ” The request of a dying parent, so made, and at such a moment, could not be refused. She is obeyed. Upon the solemn assurances of her daughter, that her last desire so strongly urged should be complied with, the mind of Mrs Robinson became composed and tranquil ; her intellects yet remained unimpaired, though her corporeal strength hourly decayed.

A short time previous to her death, during an interval of her daughter’s absence from her chamber, she called an attending friend, whose benevolent heart and unremitting kindness will, it is hoped, meet hereafter with their reward, and entreated her to observe her last requests, adding, with melancholy tenderness, “ I cannot talk to my poor girl on these sad subjects.” Then, with an unruffled manner and minute precision, she gave orders respecting her interment, which she desired might be performed with all possible simplicity. “ Let me,” said she with an impressive though almost inarticulate voice, “ be buried in Old Windsor churchyard.” For the selection of

that spot she gave *a particular reason*. She also mentioned an undertaker, whose name she recollected having seen on his door, and whom she appointed from his vicinity to the probable place of her decease. A few trifling memorials, as tributes of her affection, were all the property she had to bequeath: she also earnestly desired that a part of her hair might be sent to two *particular persons*.

One evening, her anxious nurses, with a view to divert her mind, talked of some little plans to take place on her restoration to health. She shook her head with an affecting and significant motion. "Don't deceive yourselves," said she: "remember, I tell you, I am but a very little time longer for this world." Then pressing to her heart her daughter, who knelt by her bedside, she held her head for some minutes clasped against her bosom, which throbbed, as with some internal and agonizing conflict.—"Poor heart," murmured she, in a deep and stifled tone, "what will become of thee!" She paused some moments, and at length struggling to assume more composure, desired in a calmer voice that some one would read to her. Throughout the remainder of the evening she continued placidly and even cheerfully attentive to the person who read, observing, that, *should* she recover, she designed to commence a long work, upon which she would bestow great pains and time. "Most of her writings," she added, "had been composed in too much haste."

Her disorder rapidly drawing towards a period, the accumulation of the water upon her chest every moment threatened suffocation. For nearly fifteen nights and days she was obliged to be supported upon pillows, or in the arms of her young and affectionate nurses.* Her decease, through this period, was hourly expected. On the twenty-fourth of December she inquired how near was Christmas day! Being

* Miss Robinson and a friend.

answered, Within a few days.—“ Yet,” said she, “ I shall never see it.” The remainder of this melancholy day passed in undescrivable tortures. Towards midnight, the sufferer exclaimed,—“ Oh God, oh just and merciful God, help me to support this agony !” The whole of the ensuing day she continued to endure great anguish. In the evening, a kind of lethargic stupor came on. Miss Robinson, approaching the pillow of her expiring mother, earnestly conjured her to speak, if in her power. “ My darling Mary !” she faintly articulated, and spoke no more. In another hour she became insensible to the grief of those by whom she was surrounded, and breathed her last at a quarter past twelve on the following noon.

The body was opened, at the express wish of Drs Pope and Chandler. The immediate cause of her death appeared to have been a dropsy on the chest ; but the sufferings which she endured previously to her decease, were probably occasioned by six large gall-stones, found in the gall-bladder.

All her requests were strictly observed. Her remains were deposited, according to her direction, in the churchyard of Old Windsor : the spot was marked out by a friend to whom she had signified her wishes. The funeral was attended only by two literary friends.

Respecting the circumstances of the preceding narrative, every reader must be left to form his own reflections. To the humane mind, the errors of the unfortunate subject of this memoir will appear to have been more than expiated by her sufferings. Nor will the peculiar disadvantages by which her introduction into life was attended, be forgotten by the candid,—disadvantages, that, by converting into a snare the bounties lavished on her by nature, proved not less fatal to her happiness than to her conduct. On her unhappy marriage, and its still more unhappy consequences, it is unnecessary to comment : thus circumstanced, her genius, her sensibility, and her

beauty, combined to her destruction : while, by her exposed situation, her inexperience of life, her tender youth, with the magnitude of the temptations which beset her, she could scarcely fail of being betrayed.

“ Say, ye severest—
—— what would you have done ? ”

The malady which seized her in the bloom of youth, and pursued her with unmitigable severity through every stage of life, till, in the prime of her powers, it laid her in a premature grave, exhibits, in the history of its progress, a series of sufferings that might disarm the sternest, soften the most rigid, and awaken pity in the hardest heart. Her mental exertions through this depressing disease, the elasticity of her mind and the perseverance of her efforts amidst numberless sources of vexation and distress, cannot fail, while they awaken sympathy, to extort admiration. Had this lovely plant, now withered and low in the dust, been in its early growth transplanted into a happier soil—sheltered from the keen blasts of adversity, and the mildew of detraction, it might have extended its roots, unfolded its blossoms, diffused its sweetness, shed its perfumes, and still flourished, beautiful to the eye, and grateful to the sense.

To represent the character of the individual in the circumstances of life, his conduct under those circumstances, and the consequences which they ultimately produce, is the peculiar province of biography. Little therefore remains to be added. The benevolent temper, the filial piety, and the maternal tenderness of Mrs Robinson, are exemplified in the preceding pages, as her genius, her talents, the fertility of her imagination and the powers of her mind, are displayed in her productions, the popularity of which at least affords a presumption of their merit. Her manners were polished and conciliating, her powers of conversation rich and varied. The brilliancy of her wit and the sallies of her fancy were ever tem-

pered by kindness and chastened by delicacy. Though accustomed to the society of the great, and paying to rank the tribute which civil institutions have rendered its due, she reserved her esteem and deference for those only whose talents or whose merits claimed the homage of the mind.

With the unfortunate votaries of letters she sincerely sympathized, and not unfrequently has been known to divide the profits of her genius with the less successful or less favoured disciples of the muse.

The productions of Mrs Robinson, both in prose and verse, are numerous, and of various degrees of merit: but to poetry the native impulse of her genius appears to have been more peculiarly directed. Of the glitter and false taste exhibited in the *Della Crusca* correspondence she became early sensible: several of her poems breathe a spirit of just sentiment and simple elegance.

A PASTORAL ELEGY
ON
THE DEATH OF MRS ROBINSON
[BY PETER PINDAR.]

FAREWELL to the nymph of my heart !
Farewell to the cottage and vine !
From *these*, with a tear, I depart,
Where pleasure so often was *mine*.

Remembrance shall dwell on her smile,
And dwell on her lute and her song ;
That sweetly my hours to beguile,
Oft echoed the valleys along.

Once more the fair scene let me view,
The grotto, the brook, and the grove.
Dear valleys, for ever adieu !
Adieu to the DAUGHTER of LOVE !

A
NARRATIVE
OF
THE LIFE
OF
MRS CHARLOTTE CHARKE,

YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF COLLEY CIBBER, ESQ.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT,
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

MDCCCXIX. *W*

THE Edition from which this is printed is called the Second, and bears the date of 1755. In the title-page it is stated that the book contains—

- I. An account of her birth, education, and mad pranks committed in her youth.
- II. Her coming on the stage; success there; and sundry theatrical anecdotes.
- III. Her marriage to Mr Charke, and its consequences.
- IV. Her adventures in men's clothes, going by the name of Mr Brown, and being beloved by a lady of great fortune, who intended to marry her.
- V. Her being gentleman to a certain peer.
- VI. Her commencing strolling player; with various and surprising vicissitudes of fortune, during nine years' peregrination.
- VII. Her turning pastry cook, &c. in Wales. With several extremely humorous and interesting occurrences.

“ This tragic story, or this comic jest,

“ May make you laugh, or cry—as you like best.”

Prologue to “ The What d’ye Call It.”

INTRODUCTION.

THE following piece of Autobiography is curious, as descriptive of the career of one of those reckless and anomalous individuals whose existence forms part of the romance of *real* life, which is often more wildly eccentric than that of the imagination. In the self-composed Memoirs of CHARLOTTE CHARKE we witness the development of a constitutional tendency towards vagabondism, discernible in mere childhood, and resisting, as years increased, all the restraints of education and reason. It was the misfortune of Colley Cibber to have both a son and a daughter of this description; but Theophilus Cibber, although a whimsical, wild, heartless, and unprincipled coxcomb and profligate, must yield to his sister, the heroine of the ensuing pages; the extreme singularity of whose pursuits and tendencies render her a study to all those who take a pleasure in accounting for the *lusus naturæ* of the moral world. In regard to these mental deviations, the critical anatomist is assisted by

nearly the same sort of examination as his surgical counterpart employs in respect to personal ones; and the acquirement of an extraordinary *subject* for dissection is equally valuable to both. Charlotte Charke was a something of this kind, and if no otherwise instructive, her Life will serve to shew what very strange creatures *may* exist, and the endless diversity of habits, tastes and inclinations which may spring up spontaneously, like weeds, in the hot-bed of corrupt civilization.

THE
AUTHOR TO HERSELF.

MADAM,

THOUGH flattery is universally known to be the spring from which dedications frequently flow, I hope I shall escape that odium so justly thrown on poetical petitioners, notwithstanding my attempt to illustrate those wonderful qualifications by which you have so eminently distinguished yourself, and gives you a just claim to the title of a nonpareil of the age.

That thoughtless ease (so peculiar to yourself) with which you have run through many strange and unaccountable vicissitudes of fortune, is an undeniable proof of the native indolent sweetness of your temper. With what fortitude of mind have you vanquished sorrow, with the fond imagination and promissary hopes (only from yourself) of a succession of happiness, neither within your power or view?

Your exquisite taste in building must not be omitted: the magnificent airy castles, for which you daily drew out plans without foundation, must, could they have been distinguishable to sight, long ere this have darkened all the lower world; nor can you be matched, in oddity of fame, by any but that celebrated knight-errant of the moon, George Alexander Stevens, whose memoirs, and yours conjoined, would make great figures in history, and might justly claim a right to be transmitted to posterity; as you are, without exception, two of the greatest curiosities that ever were the incentives to the most profound astonishment.

My choice of you, madam, to patronise my works, is an evidential proof that I am not disinterested in that point ; as the world will easily be convinced, from your natural partiality to all I have hitherto produced, that you will tenderly overlook their errors, and, to the utmost of your power, endeavour to magnify their merits. If, by your approbation, the world may be persuaded into a tolerable opinion of my labours, I shall, for the novelty-sake, venture for once to call you friend,—a name, I own, I never as yet have known you by.

I hope, dear madam, as Manly says in *The Provoked Husband*, that “last reproach has struck you,” and that you and I may ripen our acquaintance into a perfect knowledge of each other, that may establish a lasting and social friendship between us.

Your two friends, prudence and reflection, I am informed, have lately ventured to pay you a visit ; for which I heartily congratulate you, as nothing can possibly be more joyous to the heart than the return of absent friends, after a long and painful peregrination.

Permit me, madam, to subscribe myself for the future, what I ought to have been some years ago,

Your real friend,

And humble servant,

CHARLOTTE CHARKE.

A
NARRATIVE
OF
THE LIFE
OF
MRS CHARLOTTE CHARKE.

As the following history is the product of a female pen, I tremble for the terrible hazard it must run in venturing into the world, as it may very possibly suffer, in many opinions, without perusing it; I, therefore, humbly move for its having the common chance of a criminal, at least to be properly examined, before it is condemned: and should it be found guilty of nonsense and inconsistencies, I must consequently resign it to its deserved punishment; instead of being honoured with the last row of a library, undergo the indignancy of preserving the syrup of many a choice tart; which, when purchased, even the hasty child will soon give an instance of its contempt of my muse, by committing to the flames, or perhaps cast it to the ground, to be trampled to death by some threadbare poet, whose works might possibly have undergone the same malevolence of fate.

However, I must beg leave to inform those ladies and gentlemen, whose tenderness and compassion may excite them to make this little brat of my brain the companion of an idle hour, that I have paid all due regard to decency wherever I have introduced the passion of love; and have only suffered it to

take its course in its proper and necessary time, without fulsomely inflaming the minds of my young readers, or shamefully offending those of riper years; a fault I have often condemned, when I was myself but a girl, in some female poets. I shall not descant on their imprudence, only wish that their works had been less confined to that theme, which too often led them into errors reason and modesty equally forbid.

In regard to the various subjects of my story, I have, I think, taken care to make them so interesting, that every person who reads my volume may bear a part in some circumstance or other in the perusal, as there is nothing inserted but what may daily happen to every mortal breathing.

Not that I would have the public conceive, though I am endeavouring to recommend it to their protection, that my vanity can so far overcome my small share of reason, as to impute the success it should meet with to any other motive than a kind condescension in my readers to pity and encourage one who has used her utmost endeavours to entertain them.

As I have promised to give some account of my unaccountable life, I shall no longer detain my readers in respect to my book, but satisfy a curiosity which has long subsisted in the minds of many: and I believe they will own, when they know my history, if oddity can plead my right to surprise and astonishment, I may positively claim a title to be shewn among the wonders of ages past and those to come. Nor will I, to escape a laugh, even at my own expense, deprive my readers of that pleasing satisfaction, or conceal any error, which I now rather sigh to reflect on; but formerly, through too much vacancy of thought, might be idle enough rather to justify than condemn.

I shall now begin my detail of the several stages I have passed through since my birth, which made me the last born of Mr Colley Cibber, at a time my

mother began to think, without this additional blessing (meaning my sweet self) she had fully answered the end of her creation, being just forty-five years of age when she produced her last, "though not least in love." Nor was I exempted from an equal share in my father's heart; yet partly through my own indiscretion (and I am too well convinced from the cruel censure of false and evil tongues) since my maturity I lost that blessing: which, if strongest compunction, and uninterrupted hours of anguish, blended with self-conviction and filial love, can move his heart to pity and forgiveness, I shall with pride and unutterable transport throw myself at his feet to implore the only benefit I desire or expect, his blessing and his pardon.

But of that more hereafter——and I hope, ere this small treatise is finished, to have it in my power to inform my readers, my painful separation from my once tender father will be more than amply repaid by a happy interview, as I am certain neither my present or future conduct shall ever give him cause to blush at what I should esteem a justifiable and necessary reconciliation, as 'tis the absolute ordination of the Supreme that we should forgive when the offender becomes a sincere and hearty penitent. And I positively declare, were I to expire this instant, I have no self-interested views in regard to worldly matters, but confess myself a miser in my wishes so far, as having the transcendant joy of knowing that I am restored to a happiness, which not only will clear my reputation to the world in regard to a former want of duty, but, at the same time, give a convincing proof that there are yet some sparks of tenderness remaining in my father's bosom for his repentant child.

I confess, I believe I came not only an unexpected, but an unwelcome guest into the family (exclusive of my parents) as my mother had borne no children for some few years before, so that I was rather regarded as an impertinent intruder, than one who had a natu-

ral right to make up the circular number of my father's fireside ; yet, be it as it may, the jealousy of me from her other children laid no restraint on her fondness for me, which my father and she both testified in their tender care of my education. His paternal love omitted nothing that could improve any natural talents heaven had been pleased to endow me with ; the mention of which, I hope, won't be imputed to me as a vain self-conceit, of knowing more, or thinking better, than any other of my sister females. No ! far be it from me ; for as all advantages from nature are the favourable gifts of the power divine, consequently no praise can be arrogated to ourselves, for that which is not in ourselves positively to bestow.

I should not have made this remark, but, as 'tis likely my works may fall into the hands of people of disproportioned understandings, I was willing to prevent an error a weak judgment might have run into, by inconsiderately throwing an odium upon me, I could not possibly deserve ; for, alas ! all cannot judge alike.

As I have instanced, that my education was not only a genteel, but in fact a liberal one, and such indeed as might have been sufficient for a son instead of a daughter ; I must beg leave to add, that I was never made much acquainted with that necessary utensil which forms the housewifery part of a young lady's education, called a needle, which I handle with the same clumsy awkwardness a monkey does a kitten, and am equally capable of using the one as pug is of nursing the other.

This is not much to be wondered at, as my education consisted chiefly in studies of various kinds, and gave me a different turn of mind than what I might have had if my time had been employed in ornamenting a piece of canvas with beasts, birds, and the alphabet ; the latter of which I understood in French rather before I was able to speak English.

As I have promised to conceal nothing that might

raise a laugh, I shall begin with a small specimen of my former madness, when I was but four years of age. Having, even then, a passionate fondness for a periwig, I crawled out of bed one summer's morning at Twickenham, where my father had part of a house and gardens for the season, and taking it into my small pate, that by dint of a wig and a waistcoat, I should be the perfect representative of my sire, I crept softly into the servants' hall, where I had the night before espied all things in order, to perpetrate the happy design I had framed for the next morning's expedition. Accordingly I paddled down stairs, taking with me my shoes, stockings, and little dimity coat, which I artfully contrived to pin up, as well as I could, to supply the want of a pair of breeches. By the help of a long broom I took down a waistcoat of my brother's, and an enormous bushy tie-wig of my father's, which entirely enclosed my head and body, with the knots of the ties thumping my little heels as I marched along with slow and solemn pace. The covert of hair in which I was concealed, with the weight of a monstrous belt and large silver-hilted sword, that I could scarce drag along, was a vast impediment in my procession: and what still added to the other inconveniences I laboured under, was whelming myself under one of my father's large beaver hats, laden with lace as thick and as broad as a brickbat.

Being thus accoutred, I began to consider that it would be impossible for me to pass for Mr Cibber in girl's shoes, therefore took an opportunity to slip out of doors after the gardener, who went to his work, and rolled myself into a dry ditch, which was as deep as I was high; and, in this grotesque pigmy state, walked up and down the ditch bowing to all who came by me. But, behold, the oddity of my appearance soon assembled a crowd about me, which yielded me no small joy, as I conceived their risibility on this occasion to be marks of approbation, and

walked myself into a fever, in the happy thought of being taken for the squire.

When the family arose, till which time I had employed myself in this regular march in my ditch, I was the first thing enquired after and missed, till Mrs Heron, the mother of the celebrated actress of that name, happily espied me, and directly called forth the whole family to be witnesses of my state and dignity.

The drollery of my figure rendered it impossible, assisted by the fondness of both father and mother, to be angry with me; but, alas! I was borne off on the footman's shoulders, to my shame and disgrace, and forced into my proper habiliments.

The summer following our family resided at Hampton town, near the court. My mother being indisposed, at her first coming there, drank every morning and night asses' milk. I observed one of those little health-restoring animals was attended by its foal, which was about the height of a sizeable greyhound.

I immediately formed a resolution of following the fashion of taking the air early next morning, and fixed upon this young ass for a pad-nag; and, in order to bring this matter to bear, I communicated my design to a small troop of young gentlemen and ladies, whose low births and adverse states rendered it entirely convenient for them to come into any scheme Miss Charlotte Cibber could possibly propose. Accordingly, my mother's bridle and saddle were secretly procured, but the riper judgments of some of my followers soon convinced me of the unnecessary trouble of carrying the saddle, as the little destined beast was too small, and indeed too weak, to bear the burden; upon which 'twas concluded to take the bridle only, and away went Miss and her attendants, who soon arrived at the happy field where the poor harmless creature was sucking. We soon seized and endeavoured to bridle it; but I remember it was im-

possible to bring that point to bear, the head of the foal being so very small, the trappings fell off as fast as they strove to put them on. One of the small crew, who was wiser than the rest, proposed their garters being converted to that use, which was soon effected; and I rode triumphantly into town astride, with a numerous retinue, whose huzzas were drowned by the dreadful braying of the tender dam, who pursued us with agonizing sounds of sorrow for her oppressed young one.

Upon making this grand entry into the town, I remember my father, from the violent acclamations of joy on so glorious an occasion, was excited to enquire into the meaning of what he perhaps imagined to be an insurrection; when, to his amazement, he beheld his daughter, mounted as before described, preceded by a lad, who scraped upon a twelve-penny fiddle of my own, to add to the dignity and grandeur of this extraordinary enterprize.

I perfectly remember, young as I was then, the strong mixture of surprise, pleasure, pain, and shame, in his countenance, on his viewing me seated on my infatigable Rosinante, which though I had not then sense enough to distinguish, my memory has since afforded me power to describe, and also to repeat his very-words, at his looking out of window, "Gad demme! An ass upon an ass!"

But, alas! how momentary are sometimes the transports of the most happy? My mother was not quite so passive in this adventure as in that before related, but rather was, as I thought, too active: for I was no sooner dismounted, than I underwent the discipline of birch, was most shamefully taken prisoner in the sight of my attendants, and with a small pack-thread my leg was made the sad companion with that of a large table.

"O! fall of honour!"

'Tis not to be conceived the violent indignation and

contempt my disgrace raised in my infant breast ; nor did I forgive my mother, in my heart, for six months after, though I was obliged to ask pardon in a few moments of her, who, at that time, I conceived to be most in fault.

Were I to insert one quarter part of the strange mad pranks I played even in infancy, I might venture to affirm, I could swell my account of them to a folio, and perhaps my whimsical head may compile such a work ; but I own I should be loath, upon reflection, to publish it, lest the contagion should spread itself, and make other young folks as ridiculous and mischievous as myself. Though I cannot charge my memory with suffering other people to feel the ill effects of my unaccountable vagaries ; except once, I remember, a cross old woman at Richmond having beat me, I revenged myself by getting some of my playfellows to take as many as they could of her caps and other small linen, that hung in the garden to dry, and who sent them sailing down a brook that forced its current to the Thames, whilst I walked into the parlour, secretly pleased with the thoughts of my revenge.

This is the only piece of malice that occurs to my remembrance ; but I have too much reason to know that the madness of my follies have generally very severely recoiled upon myself, but in nothing so much as in the shocking and heart-wounding grief for my father's displeasure, which I shall not impudently dare deny having justly incurred : but I dare confidently affirm, much pains have been taken to aggravate my faults and strengthen his anger ; and, in that case, I am certain my enemies have not always too strictly adhered to truth, but meanly had recourse to falsehood to perpetrate the ruin of a hapless wretch, whose real errors were sufficient, without the addition of malicious slanders. The persons I mean, who did me these unfriendly offices, are still in being : but, *qui capit ille facit*.

I formerly wrote to my father, as I thought it an incumbent duty to inquire after his health, and at the same time implore his pardon; but could never have the happiness of even a distant hope of obtaining it. For the fore-mentioned reasons I flatter myself, as reflection and contrition have brought me to a just sense of all past failings, humanity will plead her right in his relenting heart, and once again restore me to a joy which none can conceive, who never felt the pain arising from the disgrace of being deemed an alien from the family in which they originally drew breath.

My obligations to him in my bringing up are of so extensive a nature, I can never sufficiently acknowledge them; for, notwithstanding it is every parent's duty to breed their children with every advantage their fortunes will admit of, yet, in this case, I must confess myself most transcendantly indebted, having received even a superfluity of tender regard of that kind; and, at the same time, beg pardon for not having put it to a more grateful and generous use, both for his honour and my own credit.

However, I shall lay it down as a maxim for the remaining part of life, to make the utmost amends by prudent conduct, for the miscarriages of the former; so that, should I fail in my hopes, I may not draw any farther imputation on myself, by not endeavouring to deserve, what I think so particularly my duty, if possible, to achieve.

I shall now proceed in my account. At eight years of age I was placed at a famous school in Park street, Westminster, governed by one Mrs Draper, a woman of great sense and abilities, who employed a gentleman, called monsieur Flahaut, an excellent master of languages, to instruct her boarders. Among the number of his pupils, I had the happiness of being one; and, as he discovered in me a tolerable genius and an earnest desire of improvement, he advised my mother, in a visit to me at school, to let him teach

me Latin and Italian, which she, proud of hearing me capable of receiving, readily consented to.

Nor was my tutor satisfied with those branches of learning alone, for he got leave of my parents to instruct me in geography, which, by the bye, though I know it to be a most useful and pleasing science, I cannot think it was altogether necessary for a female : but I was delighted at being thought a learned person, therefore readily acquiesced with my preceptor's proposal.

Accordingly, I was furnished with proper books, and two globes, celestial and terrestrial, borrowed of my mother's own brother, the late John Shore, esq. serjeant-trumpet of England ; and pored over them until I had like to have been as mad as my uncle, who has given a most demonstrative proof of his being so for many years, which I shall hereafter mention.

The vast application to my study almost distracted me, from a violent desire I had to make myself perfect mistress of it. Mr Flahaut, perceiving that I was too close in the pursuit of knowledge not absolutely needful, shortened the various tasks I had daily set me ; thinking that one mad mortal in a family was rather too much, without farther addition.

After I had received, in two years' schooling, a considerable share of my education (in which music and singing bore their parts), I was, through my indulgent parents' fondness, allowed masters at home to finish my studies.

Mr Flahaut, my master of languages, was continued. Mr Young, late organist of St Clement Danes, instructed me in music ; though I was originally taught by the famous Dr King, who was so old when I learnt of him, he was scarce able to give the most trifling instructions. The celebrated Mr Grosconet was my dancing master ; and, to do justice to his memory, I have never met with any that exceeded him in the easy sublime taste in dancing, which is

the most reasonable entertainment can be afforded to the spectators, who wish only to be delighted with the genteel movement of a singular or plurality of figures with becoming gracefulness; in which no performer ever so eminently distinguished themselves as Mrs Booth, widow of the late incomparable and deservedly esteemed Barton Booth, esq. one of the patentees of Drury lane theatre, conjunctive with my father and Mr Wilks.

The present taste in dancing is so opposite to the former, that I conceive the high-flown caprioles which distinguish the first performers, to be the result of violent strength and unaccountable flights of spirits, that rather convey an idea of so many horses *à la manége*, than any design formed to please an audience with the more modest and graceful deportment with which Mrs Booth attracted and charmed the hearts of every gazer.

When it was judged that I had made a necessary progression in my learning and other accomplishments, I went to Hillingdon, within one mile of Uxbridge; where my mother, who was afflicted with the asthma, chose to retire for the preservation of her health.

This was an agreeable retreat my father had taken a lease of for some years, but a winter residence in the country was not altogether so pleasing to me as that of the summer; I therefore began to frame different schemes for rendering my solitude as agreeable to myself as possible. The first project I had, was in frosty mornings to set out upon the common, and divert myself with shooting; and grew so great a proficient in that notable exercise, that I was like the person described in Farquhar's 'Recruiting Officer,' capable of destroying all the venison and wild fowl about the country.

In this manner I employed several days from morning till evening, and seldom failed of coming home laden with feathered spoil; which raised my conceit

to such a pitch, I really imagined myself equal to the best fowler or marksman in the universe.

At length, unfortunately for me, one of my mother's straight-laced old fashioned neighbours paying her a visit, persuaded her to put a stop to this proceeding, as she really thought it inconsistent with the character of a young gentlewoman to follow such diversions; which my youth, had I been a male, she thought would scarce render me excusable for, being but fourteen. Upon this sober lady's hint I was deprived of my gun; and, with a half-broken heart on the occasion, I resolved to revenge myself, by getting a muscatoon that hung over the kitchen mantelpiece, and use my utmost endeavours towards shooting down her chimnies. After having wasted a considerable quantity of powder and shot to no purpose, I was obliged to desist, and give up what I had, though wishfully, vainly attempted.

I remember upon my having a fit of illness, my mother, who was apprehensive of my death, and consequently, through excessive fondness, used all means to prevent it that lay within her power, sent me to Thorly, in Hertfordshire, the seat of Dr Hales, an eminent physician and relation, with a design not only to restore and establish my health, but with the hopes of my being made a good housewife; in which needful accomplishment I have before hinted, my mind was entirely uncultivated. But, alas! she ended where, poor dear soul, she ought to have begun; for by that time, from her desire of making me too wise, I had imbibed such mistaken, pedantic notions of a superiority of scholarship and sense, that my utmost wisdom centered in proclaiming myself a fool! by a stupid contempt of such qualifications as would have rendered me less troublesome in a family, and more useful to myself and those about me.

Learning is undoubtedly a glorious and happy acquisition, when it is encountered by a genius capable

of receiving and retaining the powerful efficacy of its worth ; yet, notwithstanding this assertion, I am certain that its greatest advantages are to be infinitely improved by launching into the world, and becoming acquainted with the different places and objects we go through and meet in travelling.

The observations to be made by that means refine the understanding and improve the judgment, as something is to be gathered from the various dispositions of people in the highest and lowest stations of life ; which persons of reflection may render greatly conducive in clearing and purging themselves of those dregs of learning, which too often, for want of this method of purifying the mind, reduce many a fine genius to sour pedantry and ill humour, that make them uneasy to themselves and obnoxious to all who converse with them.

Even in my slender capacity, I have found this remark to be just ; for notwithstanding my vanity might have excited me to a fond belief of my being wonderfully wise, in nine years' peregrination I began to find out, till I had seen something of the world, I was but rough in the mine. Observation had a little polished me, and I was soon convinced the additional helps I received from travel, almost rendered my former knowledge nothing : so that I cannot but join in Polydore's opinion ;—

“ I would be busy in the world, and learn ;
Not like a coarse and useless dunghill weed,
Fix'd to one spot, and rot just as I grew.”

Though I must acknowledge, it is an equal error for youth to set out too soon to see the world, before they are capable of digesting what they hear or see, and too frequently come back with the same light load of understanding with which they set out ; I therefore think it proper, instead of saying such-a-one is lately returned from his travels (who is so unadvisedly sent forth) rather to have it said, “ He is

lately returned from his delightful jaunts and parties of pleasure."

In the second chapter of Mr Dumont's history I have expatiated on this error, and refer my readers thereto; who, I believe, will not think my argument offensive or unreasonable.

While I staid at Thorly, though I had the nicest examples of housewifely perfections daily before me, I had no notion of entertaining the least thought of those necessary offices, by which the young ladies of the family so eminently distinguished themselves, in ornamenting a well disposed and elegant table, decently graced with the toil of their morning's industry; nor could I bear to pass a train of melancholy hours in poring over a piece of embroidery, or a well-wrought chair, in which the young females of the family (exclusive of my mad-cap self) were equally and industriously employed; and have often, with inward contempt of them, pitied their misfortunes, who were, I was well assured, incapable of currying a horse, or riding a race with me.

Many and vain attempts were used to bring me into their working community; but I had so great a veneration for cattle and husbandry, it was impossible for them, either by threats or tender advice, to bring me into their sober scheme.

If anything was amiss in the stable, I was sure to be the first and head of the mob; but if all the fine works in the family had been in the fire, I should not have forsook the currycomb, to have endeavoured to save them from the utmost destruction.

During my residence in the family, I grew passionately fond of the study of physic, and was never so happy, as when the doctor employed me in some little offices in which he durst intrust me without prejudice to his patients.

As I was indulged in having a little horse of my own, I was frequently desired to call upon one or other of the neighbouring invalids, to enquire how they did;

which gave me a most pleasing opportunity of fancying myself a physician, and affected the solemnity and gravity which I had often observed in the good doctor : nor am I absolutely assured, from the significant air which I assumed, whether some of the weaker sort of people might not have been persuaded into as high an opinion of my skill as my cousin's, whose talents chiefly were adapted to the study of physic. To do him justice, he was a very able proficient ; and, I dare say, the loss of him in Hertfordshire, and some parts of Essex, is not a little regretted, as he was necessary to the rich, and tenderly beneficent to the poor.

At the expiration of two years, his lady died, and I was remanded home, and once again sent to our country house at Hillingdon ; where I was no sooner arrived, than I persuaded my fond mother to let me have a little closet, built in an apartment seldom used, by way of dispensary. This I easily obtained, and summoned all the old women in the parish to repair to me whenever they found themselves indisposed. I was indeed of the opinion of Leander in 'The Mock Doctor,' that a few physical hard words would be necessary to establish my reputation ; and accordingly had recourse to a Latin dictionary, and soon gathered up as many fragments as served to confound their senses, and bring them into a high opinion of my skill in the medicinal science.

As my advice and remedies for all disorders were designed as acts of charity, it is not to be imagined what a concourse of both sexes were my constant attendants ; though I own, I have been often obliged to refer myself to Salmon, Culpepper, and other books I had for that purpose, before I was able to make a proper application, or indeed arrive at any knowledge of their maladies. But this defect was not discovered by my patients, as I put on significance of countenance that rather served to convince them of my incomparable skill and abilities.

Fond as I was of this learned office, I did not chuse to give up that of being lady of the horse, which delicate employment took up some part of my time every day; and I generally served myself in that capacity, when I thought proper to pay my attendance on the believing mortals, who entrusted their lives in my hands. But providence was extremely kind in that point; for though, perhaps, I did no actual good, I never had the least misfortune happen to any of the unthinking credulous souls who relied on me for the restoration of their healths, which was ten to one I had endangered as long as they lived.

When I had signified my intention of becoming a young lady Bountiful, I thought it highly necessary to furnish myself with drugs, &c. to carry on this notable design; accordingly I went to Uxbridge, where was then living an apothecary's widow, whose shop was an emblem of that described in 'Romeo and Juliet.' She, good woman, knowing my family, entrusted me with a cargo of combustibles which were sufficient to have set up a mountebank for a twelvemonth; but my stock was soon exhausted, for the silly devils began to fancy themselves ill, because they knew they could have physic for nothing, such as it was. But, oh! woeful day! the widow sent in her bill to my father, who was entirely ignorant of the curious expense I had put him to; which he directly paid, with a strict order never to let doctor Charlotte have any farther credit, on pain of losing the money so by me contracted.

Was not this sufficient to murder the fame of the ablest physician in the universe? However, I was resolved not to give up my profession; and, as I was deprived of the use of drugs, I took it into my head to conceal my disgrace, to have recourse to herbs: but one day a poor old woman coming to me, with a violent complaint of rheumatic pains and a terrible disorder in her stomach, I was at a dreadful loss what remedies to apply, and dismissed her with an

assurance of sending her something to ease her, by an inward and outward application, before she went to bed.

It happened that day proved very rainy, which put it into my strange pate to gather up all the snails in the garden ; of which, from the heavy shower that had fallen, there was a superabundant quantity. I immediately fell to work ; and of some part of them, with coarse brown sugar, made a syrup, a spoonful of which was to be taken once in two hours. Boiling the rest to a consistence, with some green herbs and mutton fat, I made an ointment, and, clapping conceited labels upon the phial and gallipot, sent my preparation, with a joyous bottle of hartshorn and sal volatile I purloined from my mother, to add a grace to my prescriptions.

In about three days after the good woman came hopping along to return me thanks for the extreme benefit she had received ; entreating my goodness to repeat the medicines, as she had found such wonderful effects from their virtues.

But fortune was not quite kind enough to afford me the means of granting her request at that time ; for the friendly rain, which had enabled me to work this wonderful cure, was succeeded by an extreme drought, and I thought it highly necessary to suspend any farther attempts to establish my great reputation, until another watery opportunity offered to furnish me with those ingredients, whose sanative qualities had been so useful to her limbs and my fame : I therefore dismissed her with a word of advice, not to tamper too much ; that as she was so well recovered, to wait until a return of her pains ; otherwise a too frequent use of the remedy might possibly lose its effect, by being applied without any absolute necessity. With as significant an air as I could assume, I bid her be sure to keep herself warm, and drink no malt liquor ; and, that if she found any alteration, to send to me.

Glad was I when the poor creature was gone, as her harmless credulity had raised such an invincible fit of laughter in me, I must have died on the spot by the suppression, had she staid a few minutes longer.

This relation is an instance of what I have often conceived to be the happy motive for that success which travelling physicians frequently meet with, as it is rather founded on faith of the patient, than any real merit in the doctor or his prescriptions. But the happiness I enjoyed, and still continue to do, in the pleasing reflection of not having, through inexperience, done any harm by my applications, I thank the great Creator for, who (notwithstanding my extreme desire of being distinguished as an able proficient) knew my design was equally founded on a charitable inclination; which I conceive was a strong guard against any evils that might have accrued from merely a wild notion of pleasing myself.

My being unfortunately deprived of the assistance of the widow's shop to carry on this grand affair, made me soon tire in the pursuit, and put me upon some other expedient for my amusement; I therefore framed the tenderest excuses I could possibly invent to drop my practice, that those who had before thought themselves indispensably obliged to me, might not conceive I had lost that charitable disposition which they had so often blessed me for, and which, indeed, I heartily regretted the not having power still to preserve and maintain.

My next flight was gardening; a very pleasing and healthful exercise, in which I past the most part of my time every day. I thought it always proper to imitate the actions of those persons whose characters I chose to represent, and, indeed, was as changeable as Proteus.

When I had blended the groom and gardener, I conceived, after having worked two or three hours in the morning, a broiled rasher of bacon upon a luncheon of bread in one hand, and a pruning-knife

in the other (walking, instead of sitting to this elegant meal), making seeds and plants the general subject of my discourse, was the true characteristic of the gardener; as, at other times, a halter and horse-cloth brought into the house, and awkwardly thrown down on a chair, were emblems of my stable profession; with now and then a shrug of the shoulders and a scratch of the head, with a hasty demand for small-beer, and a "God bless you make haste; I have not a single horse dressed or watered, and here 'tis almost eight o'clock, the poor cattle will think I have forgot 'em; and tomorrow they go a journey, I am sure I'd need take care of 'em." Perhaps this great journey was an afternoon's jaunt to Windsor, within seven miles of our house; however, it served me to give myself as many airs, as if it had been a progress of five hundred miles.

It luckily happened for me that my father was gone to France, and the servant who was in the capacity of groom and gardener, having the misfortune one afternoon to be violently inebriated, took it in his head to abuse the rest of his fellow-servants; which my mother hearing, interfered, and shared equally the insolence of his opprobrious tongue: upon which, at a minute's warning, he was dismissed, to the inexpressible transport, my gentle reader, of your humble servant, having then the full possession of the garden and stables.

But what imagination can paint the extravagance of joy I felt on this happy acquisition! I was so bewildered with the pleasing ideas I had framed, in being actually a proper successor to the deposed fellow, I was entirely lost in a forgetfulness of my real self; and went each day with that orderly care to my separate employments, that is generally the commendatory virtue, for the first month only, of a new-hired servant.

The rumour of the man's dismissal was soon spread, and reached, to my great uneasiness, to Ux-

bridge, and every little adjacent village ; upon which I soon found it necessary to change my post of gardener, and became, for very near a week, porter at the gate, lest some lucky mortal might have been introduced, and deprived me of the happy situation I enjoyed.

I began to be tired with giving denials, and, in order to put an end to their fruitless expectations, gave out that we had received letters from France, to assure us, that my papa had positively hired a man at Paris to serve in that office, and therefore all future attempts would be needless on that account.

I kept so strict a watch at the gate, during the apprehensions I had of being turned out of my places, the maids wondered what made me so constantly traversing the court yard for near eight days successively: but,

“ Alas ! they know but little of Calista.”

It was really to secure my seat of empire, which at that time I would not have exchanged for a monarchy ; and I conceived so high an opinion of myself, I thought the family greatly indebted to me for my skill and industry.

One day, upon my mother’s paying me a visit in the garden, and approving something I had done there, I rested on my spade, and, with a significant wink and a nod, asked whether she imagined any of the rest of her children would have done as much at my age ? adding, very shrewdly, “ Come, come, madam, let me tell you, a pound saved is a pound got ;” then proceeded in my office of digging, in which I was at that time most happily employed, and with double labour pursued, to make the strongest impression I could on my admiring mother’s mind, and convince her of the utility of so industrious a child.

I must not forget to inform the reader, that my mother had no extraordinary opinion of the fellow’s honesty whom she had turned away ; and what con-

firmed it, was tracing his footsteps under the chamber-windows the night after his dismissal, and the neighbours had observed him to have been hovering round the house several hours that very evening.

As we had a considerable quantity of plate, my mother was a good deal alarmed with an apprehension of the man's attempting to break in at midnight, which might render us not only liable to be robbed, but murdered. She communicated her fears to me, who most heroically promised to protect her life, at the utmost hazard of my own. Accordingly, I desired all the plate might be gathered up, and had it placed in a large flasket by my bedside. This was no small addition to my happiness, as it gave me an opportunity of raising my reputation as a courageous person, which I was extremely fond of being deemed; and, in order to establish that character, I stripped the hall and kitchen of their fire-arms, which consisted of my own little carbine, I had, through the old maid's persuasion, been barbarously divested of not long before, a heavy blunderbuss, a muscatoon, and two brace of pistols, all which I had loaded with a couple of bullets each before I went to bed; not with any design, on my word, to yield to my repose, but absolutely kept awake three long and tedious hours, which was from twelve to three, the time I thought most likely for an invasion.

But no such thing happened, for not a mortal approached, on which I thought myself undone, till a friendly dog, who barked at the moon, gave a happy signal, and I bounced from my repository with infinite obligations to the cur, and fired out of the window piece after piece, re-charging as fast as possible, till I had consumed about a pound of powder, and a proportionable quantity of shot and balls.

'Tis not to be supposed but the family was, on my first onset in this singular battle (having nothing to combat but the air) soon alarmed. The frequent reports and violent explosions encouraged my kind

prompter to this farce, to change his lucky bark into an absolute howl, which strongly corroborated with all that had been thought or said in regard to an attempt upon the house. My trembling mother, who lay half expiring with dreadful imaginations, rang her bell, which summons I instantly obeyed, firmly assuring her that all danger was over, for that I heard the villain decamp on the first firing, which decampment was neither more nor less than the rustling of the trees, occasioned by a windy night, for the fellow was absolutely gone to London the very morning I declared war against him, as was afterwards proved.

Notwithstanding I was fully convinced I had nothing to conquer, but my unconquerable fondness and resolution to acquire the character of a courageous person, I settled that point with the whole family, in begging them not to be under the least apprehension of danger, urging, that my constant firing would be the means of preventing any; and bid them consider that the loss of sleep was not to be put in competition with the hazard of their lives.

This reflection made them perfectly easy, and me entirely happy, as I had an unlimited power, without interruption, once in ten minutes to waste my ammunition to no purpose; and retiring to my rest, as soon as my stock was exhausted, enjoyed in dreams a second idea of my glorious exploits.

'Tis certain, nothing but my mother's excessive fondness could have blinded her reason, to give in to my unprecedented, ridiculous follies; as she was, in all other points, a woman of real good sense: but where the heart is partially engaged, we have frequent instances of its clouding the understanding, and making dupes of the wisest.

I shall add one unfortunate circumstance more, and then proceed to give an account of my marriage with Mr Richard Charke, whose memory will, by all lovers of music who have heard his incomparable performance on the violin, be held in great estimation.

But to my story—I had received information that there was a very fine young horse to be disposed of at Uxbridge, qualified to draw a chaise; and, having heard my father say, before he went to France, he would purchase another when he came home, I flew with distracted joy to the man's house, where this horse was to be seen; and accordingly had him harnessed and put to. This excursion was entirely unknown to my mother, who, at that time, lay extremely ill of the asthma.

The owner of the horse, knowing my family, and seeing me often drive my father's horses, made no doubt but that I was sent in fact to make trial of his; and, being willing to make his market as quick as possible, got the horse and chaise ready in a few minutes, and out I set, at the extreme hazard of my neck, when I got upon Uxbridge common; for the creature was very young and ungovernable, and dragged me and the chaise over hills and dales, with such vehemence, that I despaired of ever seeing Hillingdon again. However, the subtle devil, knowing his way home, set up a barbarous full gallop, and made to his master's house with dreadful expedition beyond my power to restrain; and, in the cart-rut, ran over a child three years of age, that lay sprawling there for its unfortunate amusement.

The violent rapidity of his course luckily prevented the death of the child, but was very near effecting mine, for grief and surprise took such hold of my spirits, I became speechless. The child was soon brought after me by the parents, attended by a numerous mob; and, as soon as I regained my speech, I ordered the infant to be examined by a surgeon: but no harm being done, more than a small graze on the neck, the affair was made up with a shilling and a shoulder of mutton.

Notwithstanding this happy acquittance from so terrible a disaster, (as ignorant people are naturally fond of striking terror), some doubly-industrious

courier, who had more expedition than brains, ran with the news to my mother of my having killed a child, which threw her into such agonizing frights as greatly hazarded her life ; and for some time was an aggravation to the illness she laboured under : for though I came home as soon as possible, and convinced her of the error of the stupified wretch that had so cruelly alarmed her, the surprise and shock so strongly possessed her, 'twas with difficulty she retained her senses.

This misfortune threw me into a kind of melancholy, that lasted as long as could be expected from one of my youth and volatile spirits ; and, to the extreme surprise of the neighbourhood, Miss Charlotte became for a little while, I believe, rather stupidly dull than justly reflecting ; for I don't remember any impression left on my mind by this accident after my mother's recovery, and the assurance I had of the boy's being living and well. However, it put a period to the fertility of my mischievous genius ; and, upon being soon after acquainted with Mr Charke, who was pleased to say soft things, and flatter me into a belief of his being an humble admirer, I—as foolish young girls are apt to be too credulous—believed his passion the result of real love, which indeed was only interest. His affairs being in a very desperate condition, he thought it no bad scheme to endeavour at being Mr Cibber's son-in-law, who was at that time a patentee in Drury lane theatre, and I in the happy possession of my father's heart, which, had I known the real value of, I should never have bestowed a moment's thought in the obtaining Mr Charke's, but preserving my father's.

Alas ! I thought it a fine thing to be married, and indulged myself in a passionate fondness for my lover ; which my father perceiving, out of pure pity tenderly consented to a conjugal union. The reader may suppose that I thought, at that time, it was the greatest favour he ever conferred on me, as indeed

I really did ; but I have some modest reasons to believe, had he indulged me under the guardianship of some sensible trusty person, to have taken a small tour into the country, without letting me know it was done with a design to break off my attachment to my then intended husband, it would have prevented the match ; and both parties, in the main, might have been better pleased ; for I am certain that absence, and an easy life, would soon have got the better of the violence of my fondness, being then of too indolent a disposition to let anything long disturb my mind.

I do not advance this as a reproach for my father's indulgence, but to give the reader a perfect idea of the oddity of my youthful disposition ; for, as sir Charles Easy says to his lady, "He is often rude and civil without design : " the same inadvertency had an equal dominion over me, and I have avoided or committed errors without any premeditation either to offend or oblige.

But to my tale—After six months' acquaintance, I was, by consent, espoused at St Martin's church to Mr Charke, and thought at that time the measure of my happiness was full, and of an ever-during nature. But, alas ! I soon found myself deceived in that fond conceit ; for we were both so young and indiscreet, we ought rather to have been sent to school than to church, in regard to any qualifications on either side, towards rendering the marriage state comfortable to one another. To be sure, I thought it gave me an air of more consequence to be called Mrs Charke, than Miss Charlotte ; and my spouse, on his part, I believe thought it a fine feather in his cap to be Mr Cibber's son-in-law : which indeed it would have proved, had he been skilful enough to have managed his cards rightly, as my father was greatly inclined to be his friend, and endeavoured to promote his interest amongst people of quality and fashion. His merit as a proficient in music, I believe is incon-

testible; and being tolerably agreeable in his person, both concurred to render him the general admiration of those sort of ladies, who, regardless of their reputation, make them the unhappy sacrifices to every pleasing object: which, *entre nous*, was a most horrible bar to my escutcheon of content; insomuch that married miss was, the first twelvemonth of her connubial state, industriously employed in the pursuit of fresh sorrow, by tracing her spouse from morn to eve through the hundreds of Drury.

I had, indeed, too often, shocking confirmations of my suspicions, which made me at last grow quite indifferent; nor can I avoid confessing, that indifference was strongly attended with contempt. I was in hopes that my being blessed with a child would, in some degree, have surmounted that unconquerable fondness for variety, but 'twas all one; and I firmly believe, nothing but the age of Methuselah could have made the least alteration in his disposition.

This loose and unkind behaviour, consequently made me extravagant and wild in my imagination; and, finding that we were in the same circumstances in regard to each other that Mr Sullen and his wife were, we agreed to part. Accordingly, I made our infant my care, nor did the father's neglect render me careless of my child; for I really was so fond of it, I thought myself more than amply made amends for his follies, in the possession of her.

When Mr Charke thought proper, he paid us a visit, and I received him with the same goodnature and civility I might an old decayed acquaintance that I was certain came to ask me a favour, which was often the case, for I seldom had the honour of his company but when cash ran low, and I as constantly supplied his wants; and have got from my father many an auxiliary guinea, I am certain, to purchase myself a new pair of horns.

When I married, it was in the month of February,

the beginning of benefit time at both theatres. Mrs Thurmond's coming on soon, who understood that I was designed for the stage the season following, requested that I might make my first appearance on her night, in the character of Mademoiselle in 'The Provoked Wife.' And I particularly remember, the first time of my playing was the last in which that matchless performer Mrs Oldfield ever charmed the town with her inimitable exhibition. She sickened soon after, and lingered till October following, when she expired; to the inexpressible loss of her acquaintance in general, and all connoisseurs in acting: though I am apt to think, had she survived that illness, the stage would not have been less liable to have sustained her loss, as she had acquired a considerable fortune, and was in the decline of life; but, in her business, still in the utmost height of perfection.

This excellent actress, from her encouragement, gave me lively hopes of success; and being possessed with a youthful transport, was rendered quite insensible of those fears which naturally attend people on their first essay on the theatre.

My father and Mrs Oldfield's approbation was no trifling addition to my self-conceit. It is true, I was happy in a genius for the stage; but I have, since my riper years, found that the success I met with was rather owing to indulgent audiences, that good-naturedly encouraged a young creature, who they thought might one day come to something, than any real judgment I had in my profession; and that I was more indebted to chance than I was aware of, for the applause I received when I accidentally stumbled on the right.

I must beg leave to give the reader an idea of that ecstasy of heart I felt, on seeing the character I was to appear in the bills; though my joy was somewhat dashed, when I came to see it inserted, "By a young gentlewoman, who had never appeared on any stage

before." This melancholy disappointment drew me into an unavoidable expense in coach-hire, to inform all my acquaintance that I was the person so set down in Mrs Thurmond's benefit bills: though my father's prudent concern intended it to be a secret, till he had proof of my abilities.

To my inexpressible joy, I succeeded in the part, and the play was in about six weeks after re-chosen for the benefit of Mr Charke and Miss Rafter, now Mrs Clive, who was then a young but promising actress; of which she has given demonstrative proofs in various lights, therefore I shall not expatiate on that subject, lest the weakness of my pen should fall short of her merit.

My name was in capitals on this second attempt; and I dare aver, that the perusal of it, from one end of the town to the other, for the first week, was my most immediate and constant business: nor do I believe it cost me less, in shoes and coaches, than two or three guineas, to gratify the extravagant delight I had, not only in reading the bills, but sometimes hearing myself spoken of, which luckily was to my advantage; nor can I answer for the strange effect a contrary report might have wrought on a mind so giddily loaded with conceited transport. I am not quite certain whether my folly and indignation might not have caused a drawn battle on such an occasion.

It happened that Mrs Horton, who played lady Fanciful the time before, was indisposed, and my sister-in-law, the late Mrs Jane Cibber, was appointed to do the part; who, notwithstanding her having been a few years on the stage, and indeed a meritorious actress, had not overcome the shock of appearing the first night in any character. I, who was astonished at her timidity, like a strange gawky as I was, told her I was surprised at her being frightened, who had so often appeared; when I, who had never played but once, had no concern at all "That's the

very reason," said she; "when you have stood as many shocks as others have done, and are more acquainted with your business, you'll possibly be more susceptible of fear." The apprehensions she laboured under gave her a grave aspect, which my insensible head at that time took as an affront; and, I remember, I turned short on my heel, as we were waiting for our cue of entrance, and broke off our conversation; nor could I bring myself, but on the stage, to speak to her the whole evening.

This ridiculous circumstance we have both laughed at since, and I found her words very true; for I'll maintain it, the best players are the most capable of fear, as they are naturally most exact in the nicety of their performance. Not that I would insinuate, by this observation, that I think myself better than in the common run of those theatrical gentry who are lucky enough to be endured through the course of a play, without being wished to be no more seen after the first act.

Such melancholy instances I have been witness of, both in town and country; whilst the poor player has bawled and bellowed out his minute on the stage, and the groaning audience hissinglly entreated he might be heard no more.

The second character I appeared in was Alicia, and found the audience not less indulgent than before. Mrs Porter's misfortune of being overturned in her chaise at Highwood hill, was the means by which I was possessed of that part. The third was the Distressed Mother, in the summer, when the young company were under my brother Theophilus Cibber's direction.

Now I leave to any reasonable person what I went through, in undertaking two such characters after two of the greatest actresses in the theatre: viz. Mrs Oldfield and Mrs Porter. By this time I began to feel I feared, and the want of it was sufficiently paid home to me in the tremor of spirits I suffered

in such daring attempts: however fortune was my friend, and I escaped with life; for I solemnly declare, that I expected to make an odd figure in the bills of mortality—"Died one, of capital characters."

Soon after this George Barnwell made his appearance on the stage, in which I was the original Lucy; and, beginning to make acting my business, as well as my pleasure, the success I had in that part raised me from twenty to thirty shillings per week: after which, having the good fortune to be selected from the rest of the company as stock-reader to the theatre, in case of disasters, I acquitted myself tolerably to the satisfaction of the masters and audience.

My first attempt of that kind was Cleopatra, for the benefit of Mr Worsdale, who was honoured with the presence of his royal highness the late prince of Wales. Mrs Heron having that afternoon the misfortune to bruise her knee-pan, she was immoveable; and I was, at the second music, sent for to read the part.

Had I been under sentence of death, and St Sepulchre's dreadful bell tolling for my last hour, I don't conceive I could have suffered much greater agony, and thought of my sister's words to some tune; for I absolutely had not a joint or nerve I could command for the whole night: and, as an addition to the terror I laboured under, Mr Quin, that worthy veteran of the stage, played Ventidius. The apprehension I laboured under in respect to the audience, which was a numerous one, to the amount of three hundred and odd pounds, was nothing in comparison to the fright his aspect threw me into.

But even this shock I got through, and was soon after induced to a second of the same nature. Mrs Butler was taken ill and the queen in 'Essex' was to be filled up: accordingly, I was sent for to supply the deficiency; which, in justice to the memory of the deceased gentlewoman, I must inform the reader she rewarded me for, by sending me, in a very polite

manner, a couple of guineas next morning. I must needs say, I did not think it worth so handsome an acknowledgment; but she sent it in such a manner that, had I refused it, I must have been guilty of a very great absurdity, as her station and mine at that time were upon very different footings; I being but a baby in the business, and she an established person of a very good salary.

I continued for that season at the before mentioned revenue; but, upon Mr Highmore's making a purchase in the theatre, there immediately happened a revolt of the greatest number of the company to the new theatre in the Haymarket. My brother being principally concerned, I also made a decampment, and was by agreement raised from thirty shillings to three pounds, had a very good share of parts, and continued with them till the whole body returned to Mr Fleetwood, who for some time carried on the business with great industry, attended with proportionable success; though, poor gentleman, I fear that super-extraordinary success was the foundation of his ruin.

It happened he and I had a dispute about parts, and our controversy arose to such a height, I, without the least patience or consideration, took a French leave of him, and was idle enough to conceive I had done a very meritorious thing. I cannot say, in the affair, he used me entirely well, because he broke his word with me; but I used myself much worse in the main by leaving him, as I have since experienced. As there are too many busy meddlers in the world, who are ever ready to clinch the nail of sedition, when once 'tis struck, so some particular people thought it worth while, by villanous falsehoods, to blow the spark of fire between Mr Fleetwood and myself into a barbarous blaze, insomuch that I was provoked to write a farce on the occasion, entitled 'The Art of Management,' wherein the reader may be assured I took no small pains to set him in a most

ridiculous light, and spared not to utter some truths which I am sensible ought rather to have been concealed: and I cannot but own, I have since felt some secret compunction on that score; as he, notwithstanding my impertinent and stupid revenge, at my father's request restored me to my former station.

What farther aggravates my folly and ingratitude, I made, even then, but a short stay with him, and joined the late Henry Fielding, esq. who at that time was manager at the Haymarket theatre, and running his play, called 'Pasquin,' the eleventh night of which I played the part of lord Place, which till then had been performed by Mr Richard Yates; but as he had other parts in that piece, Mr Fielding begged the favour of him to spare that to make room for me, and I was accordingly engaged at four guineas per week, with an indulgence in point of charges at my benefit, by which I cleared sixty guineas; and walked with my purse in my hand till my stock was exhausted, lest I should forget the necessity I then laboured under of squandering what might have made many a decayed family truly happy.

As I stand self-convicted for all the follies I have been guilty of, I hope my behaviour to Mr Fleetwood will fix no imputation, that may not be removed; and the less so, as I might say to him from the origin of our quarrel, with Peachem—

“Brother, brother, we were both in the wrong.”

My motive for leaving him the second time proceeded from a cause he had no share in; which I confess is a farther aggravation to my ingratitude. I can only acknowledge my error, and beg pardon for the folly; and, at the same time, apologize for my concealment of the reason of my second elopement, as 'twas partly a family concern, though perhaps I might be condemned were I to reveal it: but notwithstanding I've done a thousand unaccountable things, I cannot absolutely think myself blameable

for that last project, farther than in using a gentleman ill, who had behaved to me agreeably to that character, when he might have taken any advantages against me, without being thought guilty of inhumanity or injustice.

Soon after 'Pasquin' began to droop, Lillo, the author of 'George Barnwell,' brought Fielding a tragedy of three acts, called 'The Fatal Curiosity,' taken from a true tragic tale of a family at Penryn, in Cornwall, who lived in the reign of king James the First. In this play are two well-drawn characters, under the denominations of Old Wilmot and his wife Agnes, an aged pair, who had, from too much hospitality on the husband's part, and unbounded pride on the wife's, outrun a vast estate, and were reduced to extremest poverty.

The late John Roberts, a very judicious speaker, discovered a mastership in the character of the husband, and I appeared in that of the wife. We were kindly received by the audience; the play had a fresh run the season following; and, if I can obtain a grant for one night only, I intend to make my appearance once more as Mrs Agnes, for my own benefit, at the Haymarket theatre; on which occasion I humbly hope the favour and interest of my worthy friends.

At the time I was engaged with Fielding, I lodged in Oxendon street, and boarded with my sister Brett, who was but an inmate as well as myself; but I and my little daughter swelled up the number of her family. I, being a sort of creature that was regarded as a favourite cat or mischievous monkey about the house, was easily put off with what reasonable people might have deemed not only an inconvenience, but an affront; I accordingly was put into the worst apartment, and was entirely insensible of its oddity, until a blustering night roused me into an observation of its extraordinary delicacy. When I had thoroughly surveyed it, I sat down and wrote the

following description of the room, and exact inventory of my chattels.

Good people for a while give ear,
Till I've describ'd my furniture :
With my stately room I shall begin,
Which a part of Noah's ark has been :
My windows reach from pole to pole ;
Strangely airy—that in winter, O my soul,
With the dear delight, of—here and there a hole.

There is a chest of drawers too, I think,
Which seems a trough, where pigeons drink ;
A handkerchief and cap's as much as they'll contain :
O ! but I keep no gowns—so need not to complain.

Then, for my fire ; I've an inch of stove,
Which I often grieve I cannot move
When I travel from the chimney to the door,
Which are miles full three, if not fourscore.

By that time I, shiv'ring, arrive,
I doubtful grow if I'm alive.
Two foreign screens I have, in lieu
Of tongs and poker—nay, faith, shovel too.

Sometimes they serve to fan the fire,
For 'tis seldom that to bellows I aspire .
I'll challenge England's king, and the Pretender,
To say, that e'er I rust my fender.

That fashion's old, I've got a newer,
And prudently make use of iron skewer.
Now for my lovely bed, of verdant hue,
Which, ere Adam liv'd, might possibly be new.

So charming thin, the darns so neat
With great conveniency expel the heat :
But these things will not ever last ;
Each day a curtain I, in breathing, waste.

Then, for chairs ; I indeed have one ;
But, since ruin draws so swiftly on,
Will let my room, ere chair, screens,
And curtains all are gone.

These curious lines were for nineteen years, preserved by my foolish, fond sister ; who, in her turn, has been a universal friend to her brethren, or rather her sisterhood. I wish fortune had been less rigorous, and gratitude more predominant ; that the former might have prevented, or the latter have been the tender motive to assuage those sorrows and inconveniences of life, she at present labours under : from which, as far as she has a claim in me, and my poor capacity extends, I will make it the business of my life to extricate her ; as I have, when fortune was in her power, been a participater of her bounty.

I don't make this design public with any regard to myself, but with the pleasing hope of being the happy example to others, from whom she may have an equal claim, both from nature and gratitude. Poor thing ! she is now in the five and fiftieth year of her age ; and, as she has had no faults the family can allege against her, it is a pity but she should be tenderly considered by them all, that the remaining part of life may pass away without those corroding cares, that are too often the impediment to our casting our thoughts beyond the present state ; which, alas ! is the sad and dreadful consequence of a forgetfulness and disregard of the future.

I don't apprehend that to be my unhappy sister's case, for I am certain her reason and good sense can never be reduced to such a stupefaction ; yet the strongest intellects and most resolute minds may possibly be vanquished in some degree, by an oppressive load of anguish, and uninterrupted hours of care.

Now I am speaking of her, I must not omit the mention of Mr Joseph Marples, her second husband, the faithful partner of her sorrows ; who is worthy the consideration of every human heart, as he tenderly endeavours to soften all her distresses, which doubly prey on his mind, from want of power totally

to dissipate ; and wears to her a pleasing aspect with a bleeding heart. But I hope providence has still an unforeseen happiness in store for them ; and that I shall see their clouds of grief brightened with smiles of joy, from the possession of a happier fortune.

I must now leave them in the industrious and pleasing search of what I hope they'll shortly obtain, and pursue my story ; by informing my reader, when I removed from my airy mansion before described, I took it into my head to dive into trade. To that end, I took a shop in Long acre, and turned oil-women and grocer.

This new whim proved very successful, for every soul of my acquaintance, of which I have a numerous share, came in turn to see my mercantile face, which carried in it as conceited an air of trade as it had before in physic, and I talked of myself and other dealers, as I was pleased to term it. The rise and fall of sugars were my constant topic ; and trading abroad and at home, was as frequent in my mouth as my meals. To complete the ridiculous scene, I constantly took in the papers, to see how matters went at Bear key ; what ships were come in, or lost ; who in our trade was broke ; or who advertised teas at the lowest prices : ending with a comment upon those dealers who were endeavouring to undersell us ; shrewdly prognosticating their never being quiet, till they had rendered the article of tea a mere drug ; and that I and many more of the business should be obliged entirely to give it up. An injury to traffic in general ! that must be allowed.

I must beg leave, gentle reader, to tell you, that my stock perhaps did not exceed ten or a dozen pounds at a time of each sort ; but that furnished me with as much discourse as if I had the whole lading of a ship in my shop. Then as to oils, to be sure, the famous Nobs and fifty more were not to be put in competition with mine for their excellence ; and

though I seldom kept above a gallon of a sort in the house, I carried on the farce so far as to write to country chapmen to deal with me.

Then I considered, until I had established a universal trade, I'd save, for the first year, the expense of an out-rider, as I was a very good horse-woman, and go the journies myself; concluding with a significant nod, that money was as well in my own pocket as another's. But, providentially for me, I could gain no country customers; for, as the case stood, I must positively have let them had the goods considerably to my own loss: and, as a proof, will relate a circumstance that occurred to me in the selling a quarter of a hundred of lump sugar to a good-natured friend, who came to buy it for no other reason, but that I sold it.

'Tis customary in buying of sugars by the hundred, to be allowed a tret of six pounds extra. I was so insufferably proud of hearing so large a quantity demanded by my friend, that I really forgot the character of grocer, and, fancying myself the sugar baker, allowed in the twenty-five pounds the half of what I got in the hundred; alleging that 'twas our way, when people dealt for large quanties, to make an allowance over and above the common weight.

My friend, who knew no better than myself, promised me all the custom she could bring; which, if she had been as good as her word, might in due course of time have paved the way for me either to Newgate, the Fleet, or Marshalsea.

After my friend was gone with her bargain, I began, as I thought trade increasing, to think it proper to purchase a large pair of scales to weigh by hundreds, and a large beam to hang them on; and set out next morning to that purpose, traversing through Drury lane, Holborn, Fleet ditch, &c. but meeting with nothing to my mind, returned home, with a resolution to have a pair made.

The good woman who kept the house, upon hear-

ing I had been endeavouring to make this needless purchase, made bold to inquire into the necessity of it : upon which I told her what had happened the day before, and mentioned, as a proof of my knowledge of trade, the advantage I allowed to my friend. She for sometime left me amazed at her meaning, while she was almost strangled with laughing at my folly.

When she came to herself, I gravely asked where the joke lay, and what mighty wonder there was in my having an encreasing trade, who had such an universal acquaintance? As soon as she was able to convince me of the error I had committed, in giving one-half of the over-weight in a quarter of a hundred which was allowed in a whole hundred only, I began to drop my jaw, and looked as foolish as any reasonable person may suppose, on so ridiculous an occasion.

Links and flambeaux are a commodity belonging to the oil trade, at least generally sold in shops of that kind, and constant and large demands I had for both : but I remember, in particular, one of those nocturnal illuminators, who are the necessary conductors for those who did not chuse chairs or coaches, came every night just before candle time, which is the dusky part of the evening, the most convenient light for perpetrating a wicked intent, as will be proved in the sequel.

To be sure, I thought myself infinitely obliged to the sooty-coloured youth for using my shop, and was mighty proud of his handsel every evening ; and sometimes, as I dealt in spirituous liquors, treated him with a dram, and many thanks for his own and other gentlemen's custom of his profession. The arch villain smiled, and expressed great satisfaction that even, in his poor way, he had the power of serving his good mistress. He bowed and I curtseyed ; till, walking backwards out of my shop, he had complimented me out of every brass weight I had in it.

He had not been gone five minutes, ere I had occa-

sion to make use of some of them; when, to my great amazement and confusion, not one was to be found. Unluckily for me, they were piled up one within the other, and injudiciously placed in the corner of the window next the door, quite pat to his purpose; and he was really so perfect a master of his art in filching, that, notwithstanding the great ceremony that passed between us from the upper end of the shop to the lower, he went off entirely undiscovered in his villainy.

I need not tell the reader 'twas the last interview we ever had, till I, to his great misfortune, saw him making a small tour in a two-wheeled coach from Newgate to Tyburn; a college where many industrious 'squires, like himself, have frequently and deservedly taken their degrees.

This second fracas so closely pursuing the former, I had some secret thoughts of shutting up my shop for ever, to conceal my misfortunes and disgrace; though I altered my mind for that time; but, I think, in about three months after, I positively threw it up, possessed of a hundred pounds stock, all paid for, to keep a grand puppet-show over the Tennis court in James street; which is licensed, and is the only one in this kingdom that has had the good fortune to obtain so advantageous a grant.

When I first went into my shop, I was horribly puzzled for the means of securing my effects from the power of my husband, who, though he did not live with me, I knew had a right to make bold with any thing that was mine, as there was no formal article of separation between us: and I could not easily brook his taking anything from me, to be profusely expended on his mistress, who lived no farther from me than the house next to the coach-maker's in Great Queen street, and was sister to the famous Mrs Sally King, one of the ladies of the highest irreputable reputation at that time in or about Covent garden. However, to prevent any danger, I gave and took all receipts, in

the name of a widow gentlewoman, who boarded with me till Mr Charke went to Jamaica, where he died in about twenty months after his leaving England; and I sat quiet and snug with the pleasing reflection of my security, though he suspected I had a hand in the plot. He, however, did not stay long enough to trouble me on that score, for his lady was one day unfortunately arrested for a hundred pounds, as they sat tête-à-tête at dinner: and he, to shew his gallantry, went directly into the city, and immediately purchased her redemption, by taking up that sum of the merchants who were agents for the gentleman he went over with, and whom, till then, he left in uncertainty whether he would go or not.

It was concerted between this happy pair, that madam should follow; and, I suppose, pass in the Indies for his wife, which she had my leave to do, though she were a lady.

As I have, among many other censures, laboured under that of being a giddy, indiscreet wife, I must take this opportunity of referring myself to the superior judgment of those who read my story, whether a young creature, who actually married for love (at least I thought so; nay, was foolish enough to think myself equally beloved) must not naturally be incensed, when, in less than a month after marriage, I received the most demonstrative proofs of disregard, where I ought to have found the greatest tenderness: to be even to my face apparently convinced of his insatiate fondness for a plurality of common wretches, that were to be had for half-a-crown. This consequently raised in me both aversion and contempt; and, not having years enough to afford me much reflection, nor patience sufficient to sit down, like lady Easy, contented with my wrongs, till experience might by chance have made him wiser.

Had he entertained a reciprocal affection for me, he had, when I married him, so absolute a possession of my heart, 'twas in his power to have moulded my

temper as he thought fit ; but the ungrateful returns my fondness met with could not fail of the unhappy effects of a growing disregard on my side.

I was in hope the birth of my little girl might have made some impression on his mind, but 'twas the same thing after as before it ; nor did he make the least provision for either of us when he went abroad. 'Tis true I was then in Lincoln's inn fields playhouse, and from thence engaged at a good salary with the late Mr Fielding ; but then I was as liable to death or infirmities as any other part of the creation, which might have disempowered me from getting my own or my child's bread.

Pray what was to become of us then ? I laboured under the melancholy circumstance of being newly under my father's displeasure, and consequently no redress to be hoped or expected from that quarter, which he very well knew ; and, as I have been since informed, was one of the principal sowers of sedition betwixt us : though, at that time, he would explode my father behind his back, and condemn him to me, for the very things he had partly urged him to.

However, though he did not chuse to be a husband or a father, he proved himself a son, by making an assignment of twenty pounds a year, during his life, to his mother ; who constantly made it her practice to be one of the party with him and his lady, and very confidently come from them to my apartment, and give me a history of the chat of the day that had passed between them.

But peace to his manes ! and, I hope heaven has forgiven him, as I do from my soul ; and wish, for both our sakes, he had been master of more discretion, I had then possibly been possessed of more prudence.

About a year before he went to the Indies, I had the misfortune to lose my dear mother, otherwise I should not have undergone that perturbation of mind I suffered from his not leaving anything, in case of

accidents, for mine and the child's support; as my mother's tenderness would have made us equally her care, in any exigence that might have occurred to me. But, alas! she was gone, to my sorrow, even to the present minute in which I mention her; and shall ever revere her memory, as is quite incumbent on me, for her inexpressible fondness and tender regard for me, to the latest moment of her life.

This dear woman was possessed of every personal charm that could render her attractive and amiable. Her conquest over my father, was by a visit he made to her late brother, whom I have before mentioned; and, as he passed by the chamber where she was accompanying her own voice on the harpsichord, his ear was immediately charmed, on which he begged to be introduced, and at first sight was captivated. Nor, as I hear, was she less delighted with the sprightliness of his wit, than he was with the fund of perfection with which art and nature had equally endowed her. In short, a private courtship began, and ended in a marriage against her father's consent, as Mr Colley Cibber was then rather too young for a husband, in the old gentleman's opinion, he not coming to age till after, as I have been told, the birth of his second child: but, notwithstanding, my grandfather, in the end, gave her a fortune, and intended a larger, but this marriage made him convert the intended additional sum to another use; and, in revenge, built a folly on the Thames, called Shore's Folly, which was demolished some years before I was born.

Her father's family, exclusive of her children, is now entirely extinct, by the death of my uncle, who, poor man! had the misfortune to be ever touched in his brain, and, as a convincing proof, married his maid, at an age when he and she both had more occasion for a nurse than a parson.

We have proof positive of his being incapable of making a will that can stand good; for which reason I am determined, as being one of the heirs at law, to

have a trial of skill with the ancient lady, and see whether a proper appeal to the court of chancery won't be the happy means of setting aside a mad-man's will, and make way for those who have a more legal and justifiable claim to his effects, than an old woman, whose utmost merit consisted in being his servant. I am only astonished they have let her alone so long, but I promise her she shall not find me quite so passive—and that right soon.

“And heaven give our arms success,
“As our cause has justice in it.”

For some time I resided at the Tennis court with my puppet-show, which was allowed to be the most elegant that was ever exhibited. I was so very curious, that I bought mezzotintos of several eminent persons, and had the faces carved from them. Then, in regard to my clothes, I spared for no cost to make them splendidly magnificent, and the scenes were agreeable to the rest.

This affair stood me in some hundreds, and would have paid all costs and charges, if I had not, through excessive fatigue in accomplishing it, acquired a violent fever, which had like to have carried me off, and consequently gave a damp to the run I should otherwise have had, as I was one of the principal exhibitors for those gentry; whose mouths were, like many others we have seen move without any reality of utterance, or at least so unintelligible in the attempt, they might as well have closed their lips, without raising an expectation they were unlucky enough to disappoint, whether orators or players, is not material: but as I have myself been lately admitted into the number of the former, and from my youth helped to fill up the catalogue of the latter, I hope no exception will be taken, as the cap may as reasonably fit myself as any other of either profession, though I must beg leave to hint, however deficient I,

or some of my cotemporaries may be, every tragic player, at least, should be an orator.

'Tis no compliment to Mr Garrick to say he is both ; consequently encomiums are needless to prove, what the nicest judges have for some few years past been so pleasingly convinced of.

'Tis, I own, natural and necessary to apologise for digressing from a subject ; but I hope when the reader considers the merit of the person who occasioned it, I may, in the eye of reason and judgment, stand excused. Perhaps, as Mr Garrick is a person who many may undoubtedly wish to pay their court to, this remark may be deemed adulation ; but I must beg their pardons, and assure them they would in that point be guilty of a very great error, for I am the last creature in the world to be picked out for that piece of folly ; nay, I think so meanly of it, as to set it down as servility, which I heartily contemn ; and have been often blamed for a too openness of temper, that has sometimes hazarded the loss of a friend.

In regard to the above-mentioned gentleman, there is not any mortal breathing that enjoys the benefit of hearing and of sight but must receive infinite delight from his performance, though they should be ever so indifferent to him when off the stage. But that is not my case ; I have received some acts of friendship from him, therefore of course must revere him as a benefactor, and am proud of this opportunity to make him a public acknowledgment.

'Tis certain, there never was known a more unfortunate devil than I have been, but I have, in the height of all my sorrows, happily found a numerous quantity of friends, whose commiseration shall be taken notice of with the utmost gratitude before I close this narrative. Now, on to the affairs of state.

When I quitted the Tennis court, I took a house in Marsham street, Westminster, and lived very

privately for a little while; till I began to consider, that my wooden troop might as well be put in action, and determined to march to Tunbridge wells at the head of them. When I arrived, there was a general who had taken the field before me; one Lacon, a famous person, who had for many successive years, and indeed very successfully, entertained the company with those inanimate heroes and heroines; I therefore was obliged to sound a retreat, and content myself with confining my forces, and fighting against Lacon in propria personâ, at Ashley's great room.

I had living numbers sufficient to play two or three of our thinnest comedies; and our only tragedy we had to our backs was 'George Barnwell,' which I played for my own benefit the last night, and set out next morning for London.

When I arrived there, I began to consider which way I should turn myself. Being then out of the houses, and in no likelihood of future restoration, I resolved to make the best use I could of my figures without fatiguing myself any farther, and let my comedians out for hire to a man, who was principally concerned in the formation of them: but business not answering his ends and my expectations, I sold, for twenty guineas, what cost me near five hundred pounds. Another proof of my discretion! and, indeed, of the honesty of the purchaser, that knew the original expense of them, and the reality of their worth: but as I have condemned him for taking the advantage of my necessity, shall conceal his name; and hope he'll have modesty enough, if this paragraph should be read to him (by some who knew the affair), to add one sin more, in denying that he was the person.

I even gave him the privilege, as I had a licence, to make use of that and my name; which now, whenever I think proper (as I shall never exhibit anything that can possibly give offence) shall always employ

Mr Yates, who is a skilful person, and one who has made it his business from his youth upwards.

As 'tis very possible I may entertain the town with some unaccountable oddity of that kind very shortly, those that like to laugh I know will encourage me; and I am certain there is no one in the world more fit than myself to be laughed at. I confess myself an odd mortal, and believe I need no force of argument, beyond what has been already said, to bring the whole globe terrestrial into that opinion.

It has been hinted (and indeed luckily came to my ear), that I should never have patience to go through the process of my life. I don't suppose those who could advance such a piece of folly in me could possibly be my friends, and am sorry for their want of humanity, as this work is at present the staff of my life; and such an insinuation must naturally deter many from taking it in, if they suppose me capable of such an inconsistency: so far from it, that were I, by miracle, capable of riding in my coach, I would still pursue my scheme, till I had brought it to a conclusion; for a happy change of circumstances makes

“Misfortunes past prove stories of delight;”

And what now is my support, would then be my amusement.

'Tis strange, but true, let people use the most honest endeavours to support themselves, there is generally some ridiculous mortal that without rhyme or reason, and for the sake of saying something, without any real views of good or ill, are often detrimental to the industrious or oppressed. Be it as it may, 'tis an error, I fear, invincible and hurtful to both; and sure, unprovoked to offer an injury, is unpardonable! If the contrary were the case, 'tis nobler far to overlook than resent; but, as I have no reason to believe that I have offended. I hope for the future no person

will be indiscreet enough to assert that for a truth, which time will prove to be a real falsehood.

Not long after I had parted from what might really by good management have brought me in a very comfortable subsistence, and in a genteel light, I was addressed by a worthy gentleman (being then a widow) and closely pursued till I consented to an honourable though very secret alliance; and, in compliance to the person, bound myself by all the vows sincerest friendship could inspire never to confess who he was. Gratitude was my motive to consent to this conjunction, and extreme fondness was his inducement to request it. To be short—he soon died; and, unhappily for me, not only from sustaining the loss of a valuable and sincere friend, but by the unexpected stroke of death I was deprived of every hope and means of a support.

As I have overcome all the inconveniences of life this terrible shock of fate rendered me liable to, I am contented, and think myself happy; but not even the most inexplicable sorrows I was immersed in ever did, nor shall any motive whatever, make me break that vow I made to the person by a discovery of his name.

This was a means indeed by which I hoped to have secured myself far above those distresses I have known; but, alas! proved the fatal cause of all. I was left involved with debts I had no means of paying; and, through the villanous instigation of a wicked drunken woman, was arrested for seven pounds, when, as heaven shall judge me, I did not know where to raise as many pence.

The officer who had me in custody, on hearing my story, really compassionated me, and was exceeding angry at the woman, who, without cause, worked up the creditor to believe I had a fortune of five hundred per annum left me, which was not in the power of the deceased to leave; nor, as the affair was a secret,

and death sudden, any probability of such a happiness.

This misfortune was occasioned first by the stupidity and cruelty of the woman, and effected by dint of a very handsome laced hat I had on, being then, for some substantial reasons, *en cavalier*; which was so well described, the bailiff had no great trouble in finding me.

Undoubtedly I was very happy when he told me his business! having nothing in view but the Marshalsea, the gates of which I thought, though at that time in the middle of Covent garden, stood wide open for my reception! But as the man had humanity, he eased me of those fears; and, by dint of a trifling favour, conferred by poor Mrs Elizabeth Careless, (whose name will, I believe, be for some years in remembrance) I was set at large, till matters could be accommodated.

'Tis not to be expressed, the transport I felt on his leaving me behind him with Mrs Careless and her goodnatured friend, who, being an attorney, was incapable of becoming my bail, but compassionated my distress, and sent me directly to Mr Mytton, who kept the Cross Keys, requesting him to do that friendly office for me; and sent by me a note of indemnification, which Mr Mytton could by no means make any exceptions to, as the gentleman was a person of worth and honour, and besides a particular good customer to the other.

The next thing was to procure another bail to join with the former. I soon obtained one, whose good nature was easily excited to do a kind action; but, when I went to the officer and told who it was, objections were made against him, as he was obliged himself to keep close for fear of equal disaster; and, to convince me of his danger, produced a writ which had been two or three times renewed, to no purpose.

What to do in this terrible exigence I could not

tell, as I had but a day and a half longer to be at large, if I could not produce a second bail. I tried all means, but in vain ; and on the Friday following was obliged to surrender, and lay that night in Jackson's alley, at the officer's house.

I had not been there half an hour, before I was surrounded with all the ladies who kept coffee-houses in and about the garden, each offering money for my ransom : but nothing could be done without the debt and costs ; which, though there was, I believe, about a dozen or fourteen ladies present, they were not able to raise. As far as their finances extended, they made an offer of them ; and would have given notes jointly or separately, for the relief of poor sir Charles, as they were pleased to style me. 'Tis true, the officer would willingly have come into their kind propositions, as he was truly sensible of my indigence ; but, being closely watched by the creditor, who would on no terms be brought to any composition, all their efforts were ineffectual.

After two or three hours wasted in fruitless entreaties, it growing late, they left me to bewail the terrible scene of horror that presented to my tortured view ; and, with a heart overcharged with anguish, and hopeless of redress, I retired to my dormitory, and passed the night in bitterest reflections on my melancholy situation.

My poor child, who was then but eight years of age, and whose sole support was on her hapless, friendless mother, knew not what was become of me, or where to seek me, and, with watchful care, wore away the tedious night in painful apprehensions of what really had befallen me.

About seven next morning I dispatched a messenger to my poor little suffering infant, who soon came to me, with her eyes overflowed with tears, and a heart full of undissembled anguish. She immediately threw her head upon my bosom, and remained in speechless grief, with which I equally encountered her. For

some time, the child was so entirely sensible of our misfortunes, and of the want of means of being extricated from them, 'twas with difficulty I soothed her into a calm. Alas ! what has the poor and friendless to hope for, surrounded with sorrows of such a nature, that even people in tolerable circumstances find some perplexity, when so assailed, to overcome ?

I sat down and wrote eight and thirty letters before I stirred out of my chair, some of which went where I thought nature might have put in her claim, but I could obtain no answer ; and, where I least expected, I found redress !

My poor little wench was the melancholy messenger, and neither eat nor drank till she had faithfully discharged the trust I reposed in her. To be short, the very ladies who had visited me the night before, brought with them the late Mrs Elizabeth Hughes, who, by dint of her laying down a couple of guineas, and a collection from the rest, with a guinea from Mrs Douglas in the Piazza, I was set at liberty ; and the officer advised me to change hats with him, that being the very mark by which I was unfortunately distinguished and made known to him.

My hat was ornamented with a beautiful silver lace, little the worse for wear, and of the size which is now the present taste ; the officer's a large one, cocked up in the coachman's stile, and weightened with a horrible quantity of crape, to secure him from the winter's cold.

As to my figure, 'tis so well known it needs no description ; but my friend the bailiff was a very short, thick, red-faced man ; of such a corpulency, he might have appeared in the character of Falstaff without the artful assistance of stuffing, and his head proportionable to his body, consequently we each of us made very droll figures ; he with his little laced hat, which appeared on his head of the size of those made for the Spanish ladies, and my unfortunate face smothered under his, that I was almost as much incommoded as

when I marched in the ditch under the insupportable weight of my father's.

However, this smoky conveniency, for it stunk insufferably of tobacco, was a security and absolute prevention from other threatening dangers, and I prudently retired into a most dismal and solitary mansion in Great Queen street, where I was hourly apprehensive of having the house fall upon my head; though if it had, according to the old proverb, it would not have been the first misfortune of the kind that had befallen me. 'Twas the old building which has since been formed into several new and handsome houses. y

When my kind redeemers took me away, they treated me with an elegant supper, and sent me home to my child with a guinea in my pocket, which they very politely desired me to accept on as a present to her.

I passed the night in grateful thoughts, both to heaven and those appointed by that great power to save me from the gulph of absolute destruction. I never having been in a distress of that kind before, laid my sorrow deeper to heart; and the inexpressible delight of being restored to my child and liberty, was almost too much for my fluttered spirits at that time to bear. So unexpected a relief may be deemed a prodigy! But what is there so difficult or unlikely in the imagination of thoughtless mortals, that the all-gracious ruler of the world cannot bring to bear?

This very circumstance convinces me that no misfortune, of ever so dreadful a nature, should excite us to despair. What had I to conceive, but the miserable enforcement to linger out a wretched life in prison? A child who might possibly have been despised only for being mine, and perhaps reduced to beggary.

These were the entertaining ideas I had the night of my confinement; but when I found providence had been so tenderly and industriously employed in my behalf, I began to arraign myself for supposing that my relations, in such extremity, though they

were regardless of me, would have abandoned an innocent and hapless child to that rigorous fate my fears suggested.

During my solitary residence in Queen street, I never made my appearance, for a considerable time, but on a Sunday; and was obliged to have recourse to as many friends as I could muster up, to help me to a support for myself and my little fellow sufferer. She, poor child! was so deeply affected with the malevolence of my fortune, it threw her into a very dangerous illness; but, even in that distress, heaven raised a friend. My brother, Theophilus Cibber, kindly sent an apothecary at his own expense; for which I shall ever acknowledge myself extremely his debtor, and am sorry I have not the power of making a more suitable return.

I left the poor girl one Sunday, to prog for her and myself, by pledging with an acquaintance a beautiful pair of sleeve-buttons, which I effected in about two hours; and on my return, asking the landlady how the child did, having left her very much indisposed; she told me, Miss went up about an hour and a half ago, to put on some clean linen; but, by her staying, she concluded she was lain down, having complained of being very sleepy before she went up. But, oh! heaven! how vast was my grief and surprise, when I entered the room, and found the poor little soul stretched on the floor in strong convulsion fits, in which she had lain a considerable time, and no mortal near to give her the least assistance.

I took her up, and, overcome with strong grief, immediately dropped her on the floor, which I wonder did not absolutely end her by the force of the fall, as she was in fact a dead weight. My screaming and her falling raised the house; and, in the hurry of my distraction, I ran into the street with my shirt-sleeves dangling loose about my hands, my wig standing on end,

“Like quills upon the fretful porcupine;”

and proclaiming the sudden death of my much-beloved child, a crowd soon gathered round me; and, in the violence of my distraction, instead of administering any necessary help, wildly stood among the mob to recount the dreadful disaster.

The people's compassion was moved, 'tis true, but as I happened not to be known to them, it drew them into astonishment to see the figure of a young gentleman so extravagantly grieved for the loss of a child. As I appeared very young, they looked on it as an unprecedented affection in a youth, and began to deem me a lunatic, rather than that there was any reality in what I said.

One of the people who had been employed in the care, as I then thought, of my expiring infant, missing me, sought me out and brought me home, where I found the child still in violent convulsions, which held her from Sunday, eleven o'clock in the forenoon, without intermission, till between the hours of eight and nine next morning.

In the midst of this scene of sorrow Mr Adam Hallam, who lived next door to my lodging, hearing of my misfortune, in a very genteel and tender manner proved himself a real friend unasked. The first instance I had of his humanity was a letter of condolence, in which was inclosed that necessary and never-failing remedy for every evil incidental to mankind in general: and what was more extraordinary, was his constantly sending to enquire after the child's health with the same respectful regard, as might have been expected had I been possessed of that affluence I but some few months before enjoyed.

At his own request, his table was my own; and I am certain his goodnature laid an embargo on his person, as he often dined at home in compliment to me, rather than leave me to undergo the shock of mingling with his servants, or be distinguished by them as his pensioner, by leaving me to eat by myself.

It happened very à-propos for me, that Mr Hallam

had a back-door into his house, which prevented the hazards I might otherwise have been liable to by going into the street : and indeed, as Sharp says to Gayless, the back-door I always thought the safest, by which means I had a frequent opportunity of conversing with a sincere friend, whose humanity assuaged the anguish of my mind, and whose bounty was compassionately employed, for a considerable time, to protect me and mine from the insupportable and distracting fears of want.

After what I have said, in regard to the favours I received, I am certain no person who ever knew what it was to be obliged, and had honesty enough to dare to be grateful, will condemn me for making this public acknowledgment, who have no other means of doing justice to one, that had no motive or right to give such an instance of benevolence, but excited alone from a natural propensity to do a good action.

Favours, when received, are too often forgot ; and I have observed gratitude to be a principle that bears the smallest share in the hearts of those where it ought to be most strongly president, so that I begin to imagine one half of the world don't understand the real etymology of the word.

But that I may give farther assurances of my detestation of that sin of unkindness and insolence, I shall proceed to give a farther account of obligations I received from strangers, and shall begin with those conferred on me by the late Mr Delane, comedian ; who, though almost a stranger to my person, grew intimate with my affliction, and testified his concern, by raising a timely contribution to alleviate my distress ; and redoubled the favourable remedy, in the politeness of the application.

Mrs Woffington stands equally in the rank of those whose merits must be sounded in the song of grateful praise, and many more of the generous natives of Ireland, who are in nature a set of worthy people when they meet with objects of pity : and I have

made bold to expatiate, in a particular manner, on that subject in my history of Mr Dumont, which will be immediately published, after the conclusion of this narrative.

I must now mention the friendly assistance of Mr Rich, Mr Garrick, Mr Lacey (the several governors of the two theatres), Mr Beard, and many more of the gentlemen of the stage, to whose bounty I shall ever think myself indebted.

I am now going to take notice of a person who, at friendly distance, has many times afforded a happy relief to my bitterest wants; namely, the present Mrs Cibber, whose pity was once the means of saving my life, by preventing my going to a gaol: and more than once or twice fed both myself and child by timely presents, only from hearing of the sad circumstances we laboured under. Whatever the world may think in regard to my taking this public notice of her humanity, I must beg to be excused, if I insist on my being justifiable by the laws of gratitude; and, as I was glad to be obliged, should think it the height of insolence, to be ashamed to make the acknowledgment.

As soon as my poor girl began a little to recover, I sometimes used by owl-light to creep out in search of adventures; and, as there were frequently plays acted at the Tennis court, with trembling limbs and aching heart, adventured to see (as I was universally studied) whether there was any character wanting; a custom very frequent among the gentry who exhibited at that celebrated slaughter-house of dramatic poetry.

One night, I remember 'The Recruiting Officer' was to be performed, as they were pleased to call it, for the benefit of a young creature who had never played before. To my unbounded joy, captain Plume was so very unfortunate, that he came at five o'clock to inform the young gentlewoman he did not know a line of his part. I (who though shut up in the mock green-room) did not dare to tell them I could do it, for

fear of being heard to speak, and that the sound of my voice, which is particular, and as well known as my face, should betray me to those assailants of liberty, who constantly attend every play-night there, to the inexpressible terror of many a potentate, who has quiveringly tremored out the hero, lest the sad catastrophe should rather end in a spunging-house, than a bowl of poison or a timely dagger. The want of which latter instrument of death I once saw supplied with a lady's busk; who had just presence of mind sufficient to draw it from her stays, and end at once her wretched life, and more wretched acting.

Some of these kind of meritorious exhibitors were to massacre poor Farquhar that night, but not one among them capable of playing, or rather going on for Plume; which they would have done, perhaps, like a chair set up to fill up the number in a country dance. At last the question was put to me. I immediately replied (seeing the coast clear) I could do such a thing; but, like Mosca, was resolved to stand on terms, and make a merit of necessity. "To be sure, ma'am," says I, "I'd do anything to oblige you; but I'm quite unprepared; I have nothing here proper; I want a pair of white stockings, and clean shirt." Though, between friends, in case of a lucky hit, I had all those things ready in my coat pocket; as I was certain, let what part would befall me, cleanliness was a necessary ingredient.

Then I urged, that 'twould be scarce worth her while to pay me my price: upon which she was immediately jogged by the elbow, and took aside to advise her to offer me a crown. I, being pretty well used to the little arts of those worthy wights, received the proposal soon after; and, without making any answer to it, jogged the lady's other elbow, and withdrew, assuring her that under a guinea I positively would not undertake it: that to prevent any demur with the rest of the people, she should give

me the sixteen shillings privately, and publicly pay me five.

Her house was as full as it could hold, and the audience clattering for a beginning. At length she was obliged to comply with my demands, and I got ready with the utmost expedition. When the play (which was, in fact, a farce to me) was ended, I thought it mighty proper to stay till the coast was clear, that I might carry off myself and guinea securely : but in order to effect it, I changed clothes with a person of low degree, whose happy rags, and the kind covert of night, secured me from the dangers I might have otherwise encountered. My friend took one road, I another, but met at my lodgings, where I rewarded him, poor as I was, with a shilling ; which, at that time, I thought a competent fortune for a younger child.

It happened, not long after, that I was applied to by a strange unaccountable mortal, called Jockey Adams, famous for dancing the ‘ Jockey Dance,’ to the tune of ‘ Horse to Newmarket.’ As I was gaping for a crust, I readily snapped at the first that offered, and went with this person to a town within four miles of London, where a very extraordinary occurrence happened ; and which, had I been really what I represented, might have rid in my own coach in the rear of six horses.

Notwithstanding my distresses, the want of clothes was not amongst the number. I appeared as Mr Brown (a name most hateful to me now, for reasons the town shall have shortly leave to guess at), in a very genteel manner ; and not making the least discovery of my sex by my behaviour, ever endeavouring to keep up to the well-bred gentleman, I became, as I may most properly term it, the unhappy object of love in a young lady, whose fortune was beyond all earthly power to deprive her of, had it been possible for me to have been what she designed me, nothing less than her husband. She was an orphan heiress,

and under age ; but so near it, that at the expiration of eight months her guardian resigned his trust, and I might have been at once possessed of the lady and forty thousand pounds in the Bank of England, besides effects in the Indies that were worth about twenty thousand more.

This was a most horrible disappointment on both sides ; the lady of the husband, and I of the money ; which would have been thought an excellent remedy for ills, by those less surrounded with misery than I was. I, who was the principal in this tragedy, was the last acquainted with it ; but it got wind from the servants to some of the players ; who, as Hamlet says, “ can’t keep a secret,” and they immediately communicated it to me.

Contrary to their expectation, I received the information with infinite concern ; not more in regard to myself, than from the poor lady’s misfortune, in placing her affection on an improper object ; and whom, by letters I afterwards received, confirmed me, “ she was too fond of her mistaken bargain.”

The means by which I came by her letters was through the persuasion of her maid ; who, like most persons of her function, are too often ready to carry on intrigues. ’Twas no difficult matter to persuade an amorous heart to follow its own inclination ; and accordingly a letter came to invite me to drink tea, at a place a little distant from the house where she lived.

The reason given for this interview was, the desire some young ladies of her acquaintance had to hear me sing ; and, as they never went to plays in the country, ’twould be a great obligation to her if I would oblige her friends, by complying with her request.

The maid who brought this epistle, informed of the real occasion of its being wrote ; and told me, if I pleased, I might be the happiest man in the kingdom, before I was eight and forty hours older. This frank

declaration from the servant gave me but an odd opinion of the mistress; and I sometimes conceived, being conscious how unfit I was to embrace so favourable an opportunity, that it was all a joke.

However, be it as it might, I resolved to go and know the reality. The maid too insisted that I should, and protested her lady had suffered much on my account, from the first hour she saw me; and, but for her, the secret had never been disclosed. She farther added, I was the first person who had ever made that impression on her mind. I own I felt a tender concern, and resolved within myself to wait on her; and, by honestly confessing who I was, kill or cure her hopes of me for ever.

In obedience to the lady's command I waited on her, and found her with two more, much of her own age, who were her confidants, and entrusted to contrive a method to bring this business to an end, by a private marriage. When I went into the room, I made a general bow to all, and was for seating myself nearest the door; but was soon lugged out of my chair by a young madcap of fashion; and, to both the lady's confusion and mine, awkwardly seated by her.

We were exactly in the condition of lord Hardy and lady Charlotte, in 'The Funeral;' and I sat with as much fear in my countenance, as if I had stole her watch from her side. She, on her part, often attempted to speak; but had such a tremor on her voice, she ended only in broken sentences. 'Tis true, I have undergone the dreadful apprehensions of a bum-bailiff; but I should have thought one at that time a seasonable relief, and without repining have gone with him.

The before-mentioned madcap, after putting us more out of countenance by bursting into a violent fit of laughing, took the other by the sleeve and withdrew, as she thought, to give me a favourable opportunity of paying my addresses; but she was deceived,

for, when we were alone, I was in ten thousand times worse plight than before; and what added to my confusion, was seeing the poor soul dissolve into tears, which she endeavoured to conceal.

This gave me freedom of speech, by a gentle enquiry into the cause; and, by tenderly trying to sooth her into a calm, I unhappily encreased, rather than assuaged the dreadful conflict of love and shame which laboured in her bosom.

With much difficulty I mustered up sufficient courage to open a discourse, by which I began to make a discovery of my name and family, which struck the poor creature into astonishment; but how much greater was her surprise, when I positively assured her that I was actually the youngest daughter of Mr Cibber, and not the person she conceived me! She was absolutely struck speechless for some little time; but when she regained the power of utterance, entreated me not to urge a falsehood of that nature, which she looked upon only as an evasion, occasioned, she supposed, through a dislike of her person: adding, that her maid had plainly told her I was no stranger to her miserable fate, as she was pleased to term it; and, indeed, as I really thought it.

I still insisted on the truth of my assertion, and desired her to consider whether 'twas likely an indigent young fellow must not have thought it an unbounded happiness to possess at once so agreeable a lady and immense fortune, both which many a nobleman in this kingdom would have thought it worth while to take pains to achieve.

Notwithstanding all my arguments, she was hard to be brought into a belief of what I told her; and conceived that I had taken a dislike to her, from her too readily consenting to her servant's making that declaration of her passion for me; and for that reason, she supposed I had but a light opinion of her. I assured her of the contrary, and that I was sorry for us both, that providence had not ordained me to

be the happy person she designed me; that I was much obliged for the honour she conferred on me, and sincerely grieved it was not in my power to make a suitable return.

With many sighs and tears on her side, we took a melancholy leave; and in a few days the lady retired into the country, where I have never heard from or of her since, but hope she is made happy in some worthy husband that might deserve her.

She was not the most beautiful I have beheld, but quite the agreeable; sung finely, and played the harpsichord as well; understood languages, and was a woman of real good sense: but she was, poor thing! an instance, in regard to me, that the wisest may sometimes err.

On my return home, the itinerant troop all assembled round me, to hear what had passed between the lady and me—when we were to celebrate the nuptials? Besides many other impertinent, stupid questions; some offering, agreeable to their villanous dispositions, as the marriage they supposed would be a secret, to supply my place in the dark, to conceal the fraud: upon which I looked at them very sternly, and with the contempt they deserved, demanded to know what action of my life had been so very monstrous, to excite them to think me capable of one so cruel and infamous?

For the lady's sake, whose name I would not for the universe have had banded about by the mouths of low scurrility, I not only told them I had revealed to her who I was, but made it no longer a secret in the town, that, in case it was spoke of, it might be regarded as an impossibility, or at worst, a trumped-up tale by some ridiculous blockhead who was fond of hearing himself prate, as there are indeed too many such: of which, in regard to my own character, I have been often a melancholy proof; and, as it just now occurs to my memory, will inform the reader.

As misfortunes are ever the mortifying parents of

each other, so mine were teeming, and each new day produced fresh sorrow: but, as if the very fiends of destruction were employed to perpetrate mine, and that my real miseries were not sufficient to crush me with their weight, a poor beggarly fellow, who had been sometimes a supernumerary in Drury lane theatre, and part-writer, forged a most villanous lie, by saying I hired a very fine bay gelding, and borrowed a pair of pistols, to encounter my father upon Epping forest, where I solemnly protest I don't know I ever saw my father in my life: that I stopped the chariot, presented a pistol to his breast, and used such terms as I am ashamed to insert; threatened to blow his brains out that moment if he did not deliver, upbraiding him for his cruelty in abandoning me to those distresses he knew I underwent, when he had it so amply in his power to relieve me: that since he would not use that power, I would force him to a compliance, and was directly going to discharge upon him, but his tears prevented me, and asking my pardon for his ill-usage of me, gave me his purse with threescore guineas, and a promise to restore me to his family and love, on which I thanked him and rode off.

A likely story, that my father and his servants were all so intimidated, had it been true, as not to have been able to withstand a single stout highwayman, much more a female, and his own daughter too! However, the story soon reached my ear, which did not more enrage me on my own account, than the impudent, ridiculous picture the scoundrel had drawn of my father in this supposed horrid scene. The recital threw me into such an agonizing rage, I did not recover it for a month; but the next evening I had the satisfaction of being designedly placed where this villain was to be, and, concealed behind a screen, heard the lie re-told from his own mouth.

He had no sooner ended, than I rushed from my covert, and, being armed with a thick oaken plant, knocked him down without speaking a word to him;

and, had I not been happily prevented, should, without the least remorse, have killed him on the spot. I had not breath enough to enquire into the cause of his barbarous falsehood, but others, who were less concerned than myself, did it for me; and the only reason he assigned for his saying it was, he meant it as a joke, which considerably added to the vehemence of my rage: but I had the joy of seeing him well caned, and obliged to ask my pardon on his knees—Poor satisfaction for so manifest an injury!

This is, indeed, the greatest and most notorious piece of cruelty that was ever forged against me; but 'tis a privilege numbers have taken with me, and I have generally found in some degree or other my cause revenged, though by myself unsought: and 'tis more than morally possible I may live to see the tears of penitence flow from the eyes of a yet remaining enemy, to whose barbarity I am not the only victim in the family. But,

“ — Come what come may,

“ Patience and time run through the roughest day.”

If the person I mean was herself guiltless of errors, she might “stand in some rank of praise” for her assiduity in searching out the faults of others, as it might be reasonably supposed the innocent could never wish to be the author of ill to their fellow-creatures, and those especially nearly allied in blood. We have all realities of folly too sufficient to raise a blush, in thinking minds, without the barbarous imposition of imaginary ones, which I, and others in the family, have been cruelly branded with. I shall only give a hint to the lady, which I hope she'll prudently observe:

“ The faults of others we with ease discern,

“ But our own frailties are the last we learn.”

I shall now give a full account of, I think, one of the most tragical occurrences of my life, which but

last week happened to me. The reader may remember, in the first number of my narrative I made a public confession of my faults: and, pleased with the fond imagination of being restored to my father's favour, flattered myself, ere this treatise could be ended, to ease the hearts of every humane breast, with an account of a reconciliation.

But how fruitless was my attempt! I wrote, and have thought it necessary, in justification of my own character, to print the letter I sent my father; who, forgetful of that tender name, and the gentle ties of nature, returned it me in a blank. Sure that might have been filled up with blessing and pardon, the only boon I hoped for, wished, or expected. Can I then be blamed for saying with the expiring Romeo,

“Fathers have flinty hearts! No tears

“Will move 'em!—Children must be wretched.”

This shocking circumstance has since confined me to my bed, and has been cruelly aggravated by the terrible reflection of being empowered to say, with Charles in the ‘Fop’s Fortune,’* “I’m sorry that I’ve lost a father!”

I beg pardon for this intrusion on the reader’s patience, in offering to their consideration the following letter.

To Colley Cibber, esq. at his house in Berkeley square.

Saturday, March 8, 1755.

HONOURED SIR,

I DOUBT not but you are sensible I last Saturday published the first number of a Narrative of my Life, in which I made a proper concession in regard to those unhappy miscarriages which have for many years justly deprived me of a father’s fondness. As

* The ‘Fop’s Fortune,’ a comedy, was the production of Colley Cibber, and was first played at

I am conscious of my errors, I thought I could not be too public in suing for your blessing and pardon; and only blush to think, my youthful follies should draw so strong a compunction on my mind in the meridian of my days, which I might have so easily avoided.

Be assured, sir, I am perfectly convinced I was more than much to blame; and that the hours of anguish I have felt have bitterly repaid me for the commission of every indiscretion, which was the unhappy motive of being so many years estranged from that happiness I now, as in duty bound, most earnestly implore.

I shall, with your permission, sir, send again, to know if I may be admitted to throw myself at your feet; and, with sincere and filial transport, endeavour to convince you that I am,

Honoured sir,

Your truly penitent and dutiful daughter,

CHARLOTTE CHARKE.

When I sent, as is specified in the letter, for an answer, I engaged a young lady, whose tender compassion was easily moved to be the obliging messenger. She returned with friendly expedition and delivered me my own epistle, enclosed in a blank, from my father. By the alteration of my countenance she too soon perceived the ill success of her negociation, and bore a part in my distress.

I found myself so dreadfully disconcerted, I grew impatient to leave my friend, that I might not intrude too far on her humanity, which I saw was sensibly affected with my disappointment. A disappointment indeed! to be denied that from mortal man which heaven is well pleased to bestow, when addressed with sincerity and penitence, even for capital offences.

The prodigal, according to holy writ, was joyfully received by the offended father: nay, mercy has even extended itself at the place of execution, to notorious malefactors; but as I have not been guilty

of those enormities incidental to the forementioned characters, permit me, gentle reader, to demand what I have done so hateful! so very grievous to the soul! so much beyond the reach of pardon! that nothing but my life could make atonement? which I can bring witness was a hazard I was immediately thrown into.

The shock of receiving my own letter did not excite a sudden gust of unwarrantable passion, but preyed upon my heart with the slow and eating fire of distraction and despair, till it ended in a fever, which now remains upon my spirits; and which I fear I shall find a difficult task to overcome.

The late George Lillo's character of 'Thoroughgood,' in his tragedy of 'George Barnwell,' sets a beautiful example of forgiveness, where he reasonably reflects upon the frailties of mankind, in a speech apart from the afflicted and repenting youth: "When we have offended heaven, it requires no more; and shall man, who needs himself to be forgiven, be harder to appease?" Then turning to the boy, confirms his humanity, by saying; "If my pardon or my love be of moment to your peace, look up, secure of both."

How happy would that last sentence have made me! as the want of it has absolutely given me more inexpressible anguish than all the accumulated sorrows I had known before; being now arrived to an age of thinking, and well weighing the consequences arising from the various occurrences of life: but this I fear will prove the heaviest and bitterest corrosive to my mind; and the more I reflect on it, find myself less able to support such unkindness from that hand, which I thought would have administered the gentle balm of pity.

I am very certain my father is to be, in part, excused, as he is too powerfully persuaded by his cruel monitor, who neither does, or ever will, pay the least regard to any part of the family, but herself: and though within a year of threescore, pursues her own interest

to the detriment of others, with the same artful vigilance that might be expected from a young sharper of twenty-four. I am certain I have found it so, and am too sure of its effects from the hour of my birth; and my first fault was being my father's last born. Even the little follies of prattling infancy were by this person construed into crimes, before I had a more distinguishing sense than a kitten. As I grew up, I too soon perceived a rancorous disposition towards me, attended with malice prepense to destroy that power I had in the hearts of both my parents, where I was perhaps judged to sit too triumphant, and maintained my seat of empire in my mother's to her latest moments: and, 'tis possible, had she lived, my enemy might not have carried this cruel point, to prevent what I think I had a natural right to receive, when I so earnestly implored it.

One thing I must insert for her mortification, that my conscience is quite serene; and though she won't suffer my father to be in friendship with me, I am perfectly assured that I have, in regard to any offences towards him, made my peace with the Power Supreme, which neither her falsehood nor artful malice could deprive me of. 'Tis now my turn to forgive, as being the injured person; and to show her how much I choose to become her superior in mind, I not only pardon, but pity her: though I fear she rather pursues the rules observed in the following lines:—

“Forgiveness to the injur'd does belong;

“But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.”

That I have suffered much, is too evidential; and though I neither proposed nor expected more than what my letter expresses, I hope my father's eyes, for the sake of his family who are oppressed, may be one day opened. For my part, I cease to think myself belonging to it, and shall conclude this painful subject with an assurance to my brother's two daughters, “That I am sincerely pleased they are so hap-

pily provided for, and hope they will have gratitude and prudence enough to preserve their grandsire's blessing, and never put it in the power of artful treachery to elbow them out of his favour, as I have been, and that most cruelly.

I remember, the last time I ever spoke with my father, a triumvirate was framed to that end, and I was sent for from the playhouse to put this base design in execution. After being baited like a bull at a stake, and perceiving they were resolved to carry their horrid point against me, I grew enraged and obstinate; and finding a growing indignation swelling in my bosom, answered nothing to their purpose, which incensed my father: nor can I absolutely blame him, for 'twas undoubtedly my duty to satisfy any demand he should think proper to make. But then again, I considered that his judgment was sufficient to correct the errors of my mind, without the insolent assistance of those whose wicked hearts were too fraught with my ruin.

My father having been worked up to a strong fit of impatience, hastily quitted his house, with a declaration not to return to it till I was gone. This, I am too well assured,

“ Was a joyful sound to Cleopatra's ear.”

I staid a few moments after him, when she who was once my eldest sister was pleased to ask the rest of her colleagues, if they had done with me; who answering in the affirmative, in a peremptory manner turned me out of doors.

I was then married, and had been so near four years, therefore did not conceive that anyone had a right to treat me like a child, and could not easily brook being forced into a submission of that nature. But the main design was to deprive me of a birth-right—and they have done it; for which, in obedience to the laws divine, I beseech heaven to forgive them, and bring them to repentance, ere it be too

late. And let Goneril take care: she has found a brace of Cordelias in the family; which that they may ever continue is my heartiest wish and earnest prayer. Nor would I have the poor children think, because they are made happy, that I envy them the advantages they possess. No! so far from it, I am rather delighted than displeased, as it convinces me my father has yet some power over himself; and, though deaf to me, has listened to the tender call of mercy by a seasonable protection of their youth and innocence.

I apprehend I shall be called in question for my inability, in conveying ideas of the passions which most tenderly effect the heart, by so often having recourse to abler pens than my own—by my frequent quotations; but, in answer to that, I must beg to be excused, and also justified, as mine and others' griefs were more strongly painted by those authors I have made bold with, than was in the power of my weak capacity. I thought there was greater judgment in such references, than in vainly attempting to blunder out my distress, and possibly by that means tire the reader in the perusal.

As I have finished my tragical narration, I shall return to the town where I was honoured with the young lady's regard. Our departure from thence happened soon after, and kings, queens, lords, and commons were all tossed up in an undistinguished bundle from that place; and, like Scarron's itinerants, escorted to another in a cart.

As my unlucky stars were ever employed in working on the anvil of misfortune, I, unknowingly, took a lodging in a bailiff's house, though not as Clodio did, who had three writs against him; but I was not absolutely certain how long it might be, ere so terrible a catastrophe might be the case, being then but ten miles from London, and every hour of my life liable to be seen by some air-taking tradesman, to whom 'twas twenty to one I might be indebted.

Under such a circumstance as this, to be sure, I passed my time mighty pleasingly ! But that I might be delivered of the anxiety and constant fears that attended me, I persuaded our manager, who was under the same unfortunate circumstance, that there was, to my certain knowledge, a writ issued against him, with which he was soon alarmed ; and in order to elude the hunters, suddenly took away his company by night.

I own this was a base trick to deprive the town of the infinite pleasure they must have received from the incomparable representations of our sonorous collection ; who, if noise could plead any claim to merit, they were undoubtedly the greatest proficient of the age. I have often wondered that these bawling heroes do not as tenderly compassionate their brains, as the retailers of flounders in London streets, by an application of their hand to one ear, to preserve the drum by that necessary caution.

However, away we went, and to the great surprise of the inhabitants of the next place we adventured to, about six o'clock on the Sunday morning we made our entry, and besieged the town ; but as our commander was one of a most intrepid assurance, he soon framed some political excuses for the unseasonableness both of the hour and day. The landlord, who happened luckily for us to be an indolent, good-natured man, seeing so large a company, and such boxes full of nothing, come into his house, easily dispensed with the oddity of our arrival, and called out lustily for his maid and daughter to set on the great pot for the buttock of beef, and to make a fine fire to roast the loin of veal. He also ordered the ostler to help up with the boxes, which, I own, were weighty ; but I believe the chief of the burden consisted of scabbardless, rusty swords, and departed mopsticks, transmigrated into tragedy truncheons.

For the first week we lived like those imaginary sons of kings we frequently represented, but, at

length, we played a night or two, and no money coming, upon inquiry what was for dinner, the good host, with an altered countenance, signified he thought 'twould be better for us to find our own provision; and apprehending 'twould not do, he advised us, to make a good house, to pay him and march off: upon which one, whose appetite was extremely keen, discovered a sudden paleness; another, enraged at the disappointment, and feeling the same demands from nature, though not equally passive in his disposition, thundered out a volley of oaths, with the addition of terrible threats to leave the house, which the landlord would have been well-pleased had he put in force, and with a calm contempt signified as much.

As I had a child to support as well as my unfortunate self, I thought it highly proper to become a friendly mediator between these two persons, and very judiciously introduced myself into farther credit, by endeavouring to palliate the matter: but the insensible puppy, paying more regard to his offended honour than his craving appetite, scolded himself out of the house; and my daughter and I were continued, by my prudently preserving the gentleman, instead of launching into the barbarous enormities of the Billingsgate hero.

Business continuing very shocking, I really was ashamed to presume any longer on the partial regard paid to me by the injured man; and, at last proposed his using his interest to put off as many tickets as he possibly could, in order to make up the several deficiencies of the company. This proposition was kindly accepted, and he soon dispersed a sufficient number of tickets to defray all charges, with many acknowledgments to me for the hint; and that I might not run the hazard of losing the reputation I had gained, I set off the day after, well knowing that a second misfortune of this nature would not have so happy an end.

With a solitary shilling I went to London, and took

a lodging in about two hours afterwards, at a private house in Little Turnstile, Holborn; but being soon enquired after by another manager, set out from London for Dartford, about three o'clock in the afternoon on foot, in a dreadful shower of rain, and reached the town by eight in the evening.

I played that night, for 'tis losing their charter to begin before nine or ten; but my pumps being thin, and the rain heavy, I contracted such a hoarseness, I was the day following turned off with half-a-crown, and rendered incapable. An excellent demonstration of the humanity of those low-lived wretches, who have no farther regard to the persons they employ but while they are immediately serving 'em; and look upon players like pack-horses, though they live by 'em!

When I got to London I had, on account of my hoarseness, no view of getting my bread, as 'twas impossible to hear me speak without a close application of an ear to my mouth. I was then reduced to the necessity of pledging, from day to day, either my own or my child's clothes for our support; and we were stripped to even but a bare change to keep us decently clean, by the time I began to recover my voice.

As soon as I was capable of speaking to be heard, I took a second owl-light opportunity to seek for business, and happily succeeded in my endeavour; and as from evil often unexpected good arises, so did it then to me. I went to play a part in Gravel lane, where I met with a woman, who told me she had scenes and clothes in limbo for two guineas; and if I could propose any means for their redemption, she would make me manager of her company, if I thought fit to set out with her. I assured her, so far from raising two guineas, I really did not know where to levy as many pence; but, in the night, contemplating on my hapless fate, I recollected a friend that I believed would, on trial, oblige me with that sum.

To strengthen my cause, I wrote a letter as from a spunging-house, and sent one of the performers, who had extremely the air of a bum-bailiff, to represent that character. My friend, moved at my supposed distress, directly granted my suit; the goods were redeemed, and the next morning we set sail, with a few hands, for Gravesend.

For about a month we got, one week with another, a guinea each person; from thence we proceeded to Harwich, where we met with equal success for three weeks more; but unfortunately the manageress's husband, who was no member of the company, was under sentence of transportation in Newgate, and she being frequently obliged to pay her devoirs to her departing spouse in the dismal castle of distress, we broke up, and I returned to London.

My projecting brain was forced again to set itself to work to find fresh means of subsistence; but for some time its labours were ineffectual, till even the last thread of invention was worn out. At last, I resolved to pay circular visits to my goodnatured friends who redeemed me from the jaws of destruction, when under confinement in Jackson's alley. I thought the best excuse I could make for becoming so importunate was, to fix it on a point of gratitude, in taking the earliest opportunity my circumstances would admit of, to return my sincerest thanks for so infinite an obligation; and, after having starved all day, by the friendly assistance of the night, I adventured, and was, by each person in my several visits, kindly received, and constantly sent home with a means to subsist for sometimes a day or two; which, as my circumstances stood, was no small comfort to one who proceeded in paralytic order upon every excursion.

Among the distressful evening patrols I made, I one evening paid my brother a visit, who kindly compassioned my sorrow, and clapping half-a-crown in my hand, earnestly enjoined me to dine next day with him at a friend's house, who he knew had a natural

tendency to acts of humanity, and conceived would, in a genteel manner, be serviceable to me. His good-natured design had the desired effect; and in less than three days I was, by my brother's friend, introduced to Lord A——a, who wanted a gentleman, being newly come from Ireland; and nice in regard to the person he intended for that office. One well-bred, and who could speak French, were two necessary articles; upon which mention was made of me, and an open declaration who I really was, with a piteous account of my misfortunes, which his lordship very tenderly considered, and received me upon the recommendation of my brother's friend.

The day following I entered into my new office, which made me the superior domestic in the family. I had my own table, with a bottle of wine, and any single dish I chose for myself, extra of what came from my lord's, and a guinea paid me every Wednesday morning, that being the day of the week on which I entered into his lordship's service.

At this time my lord kept in the house with him a *fille de joie*. Though no great beauty, yet infinitely agreeable, a native of Ireland, remarkably genteel, and finely shaped; and a sensible woman, whose understanding was embellished by a fund of goodnature.

When there was any extraordinary company, I had the favour of the lady's at my table; but when there was no company at all, his lordship permitted me to make a third person at his, and very goodnaturedly obliged me to throw off the restraint of behaviour incidental to the servant, and assume that of the humble friend and cheerful companion. Many agreeable evenings I passed in this manner; and when bed-time approached I took leave and went home to my own lodgings, attending the next morning at nine, my appointed hour.

I marched every day through the streets with ease and security, having his lordship's protection, and proud to cock my hat in the face of the best of the

bailiffs, and shake hands with them into the bargain. In this state of tranquillity I remained for about five weeks, when, as the devil would have it, there came two supercilious coxcombs, who, wanting discourse and humanity, hearing that I was his lordship's gentleman, made me their unhappy theme, and took the liberty to arraign his understanding for entertaining one of an improper sex in a post of that sort. His lordship's argument was, for a considerable time, supported by the strength of his pity for an unfortunate wretch, who had never given him the least offence : but the pragmatistical blockheads teased him at last into a resolution of discharging me the next day, and I was once again reduced to my scenes of sorrow and desolation.

I must do justice to the peer, to confess he did not send me away empty handed ; but so small a pittance as he was pleased to bestow was little more than a momentary support for myself and child.

When my small stock was exhausted, I was most terribly puzzled for a recruit. Friendship began to cool ! shame encompassed me ! that where I had the smallest hope of redress remaining, I had not courage sufficient to make an attack. In short, life became a burden to me, and I began to think it no sin not only to wish, but even desire to die. When poverty throws us beyond the reach of pity, I can compare our beings to nothing so adaptly, as the comfortless array of tattered garments in a frosty morning.

But providence, who has ever been my friend and kind director, as I was in one of my fits of despondency, suddenly gave a check to that error of my mind, and wrought in me a resolution of making a bold push, which had but two chances, either for my happiness or destruction—which is as follows :

I took a neat lodging in a street facing Red Lion square, and wrote a letter to Mr Beard, intimating to him the sorrowful plight I was in ; and, in a quarter of an hour after, my request was most obligingly

complied with by that worthy gentleman, whose bounty enabled me to set forward to Newgate market, and buy a considerable quantity of pork at the best hand, which I converted into sausages, and with my daughter set out laden with each a burden as weighty as we could well bear; which, not having been used to luggages of that nature, we found extremely troublesome: but *necessitas non habet leges*—We were bound to that, or starve.

Thank heaven! our loads were like Æsop's, when he chose to carry the bread, which was the weightiest burden, to the astonishment of his fellow-travellers; not considering that his wisdom preferred it, because he was sure it would lighten as it went; so did ours, for, as I went only where I was known, I soon disposed, among my friends, of my whole cargo; and was happy in the thought, that the utmost excesses of my misfortunes had no worse effect on me, than an industrious and honest inclination to get a small livelihood, without shame or reproach: though the arch-duchess of our family, who would not have relieved me with a halfpenny roll or a draught of small-beer, imputed this to me as a crime.

I suppose she was possessed with the same dignified sentiments Mrs Peachum is endowed with, and thought the honour of their family was concerned; if so, she knew the way to have prevented the disgrace, and in a humane, justifiable manner, have preserved her own from that taint of cruelty I doubt she will never overcome.

My being in breeches was alleged to me as a very great error, but the original motive proceeded from a particular cause; and I rather choose to undergo the worst imputation that can be laid on me on that account, than unravel the secret, which is an appendix to one I am bound, as I before hinted, by all the vows of truth and honour everlastingly to conceal.

For some time I subsisted as a higgler, with tolerable success; and, instead of being despised by those

who had served me in my utmost exigencies, I was rather applauded. Some were tender enough to mingle their pitying tears with their approbation of my endeavouring at an honest livelihood, as I did not prostitute my person, or use any other indirect means for support, that might have brought me to contempt and disgrace.

Misfortunes, to which all are liable, are too often the parents of forgetfulness and disregard in those we have, in happier times, obliged. Too sure I found it so! for I could name many persons, who are still in being, that I have both clothed and fed, who have since met with success; but when strong necessity reduced me to an attempt of using their friendship, scarce afforded me a civil answer, which closed in an absolute denial, and consequently the sting of disappointment on such occasions struck the deeper to my heart: though none so poignant as the rebuffs I met with from those who ought, in regard to themselves, to have prevented my being under such universal obligations; but, instead of acting agreeably to the needful sentiments of compassion and sorrowful regret for the sufferings of a near relation, where a villanous odium could not be thrown, a ridiculous one was sure to be cast, even on the innocent actions of my life.

Upon being met with a hare in my hand, carried by order to the peer I had then lately lived with, this single creature was enumerated into a long pole of rabbits; and 'twas affirmed as a truth, that I made it my daily practice to cry them about the streets.

This falsehood was succeeded by another, that of my selling fish, an article I never thought of dealing in; but notwithstanding, the wicked forger of this story positively declared that I was selling some flounders one day, and, seeing my father, stept most audaciously up to him, and slapt one of the largest I had full in his face. Who that has common sense could be so credulous to receive the least impression

from a tale so inconsistent; or that if it had been true, if I had escaped my father's rage, the mob would not, with strictest justice, have prevented my surviving one moment such an unparalleled villany?

I always thought myself unaccountable enough in reality, to excite the various passions of grief and anger, pity or contempt, without unnecessary additional falsehoods to aggravate my misdeeds. I own I was obliged, till seized with a fever, to trudge from one acquaintance to another with pork and poultry, but never had the honour of being a travelling fish-monger, nor the villany of being guilty of that infamous crime I was inhumanly charged with.

When I was brought so low by my illness as to be disempowered to carry on my business myself, I was forced to depend upon the infant industry of my poor child, whose strength was not able to bear an equal share of fatigue, so that I consequently was obliged to suffer a considerable deficiency by the neglect of my customers: and though I could scarce afford myself the least indulgence in regard to my illness, I found, though in a trifling degree, it largely encroached upon my slender finances, so that I was reduced to my last three pounds of pork, nicely prepared for sausages, and left it on the table covered up. As I was upon recovery, I took it in my head a little fresh air would not be amiss, and set forth into Red Lion fields: but, on my return, oh! disastrous chance: a hungry cur had most savagely entered my apartment, confounded my cookery, and most inconsiderately devoured my remaining stock; and from that hour a bankruptcy ensued! the certificate of which was signed by the woefulness of my countenance at the horrid view.

The child and I gaped and stared at each other; and, with a despondency in our faces very natural on so deplorable an occasion, we sat down and silently conceived that starving must be the sad event of this shocking accident, having at that time neither meat,

money, nor friends. My week's lodging was up the next day, and I was very sure of a constant visit from my careful landlord, but how to answer him was a puzzling debate between me and myself; and I was very well assured could only be answered but by an affirmative in that point.

After having sighed away my senses for my departed pork, I began to consider that sorrow would not retrieve my loss, or pay my landlord; and without really knowing where to go, or to whom I should apply, I walked out till I should either meet an acquaintance, or be inspired with some thought that might happily draw off the scene of distress I was then immersed in.

Luckily, I met with an old gentlewoman whom I had not seen many years, and who knew me when I was a child. She, perceiving sadness in my aspect, enquired into the cause of that, and my being in men's clothes; which, as far as I thought proper, I informed her. When we parted, she slipped five shillings into my hand, on which I thankfully took leave, went home with a cheerful heart, paid my lodging off next morning, and quitted it.

The next vexation that arose, was how to get another; for the child was too young to be sent on such an errand, and I did not dare to make my appearance too openly: however, that grief was soon solved by the goodnature of a young woman, who gave a friendly invitation to us both; and, though not in the highest affluence, supported myself and child for some time, without any view or hopes of a return, which has since established a lasting friendship between us, as I received more humanity from her indigence, than I could obtain even a glimpse of from those whose fortunes I had a more ample right to expect a relief from.

I had not been many days with my friend before I relapsed, my fever encreasing to that degree, my

death was hourly expected; and, being deprived of my senses, was left without means of life in this unhappy situation, and had it not been for the extensive goodness of the person before-mentioned, my child must have either begged her bread, or perished for the want of it.

When I was capable of giving a rational answer, she was my first care; and I had, in the midst of this extremity, the pleasing relief of being informed, my friend's humanity had protected her from that distress I apprehended she must have otherwise suffered from the severity of my illness. I was incapable of writing, and therefore sent a verbal message, by my good friend, to my lord A—a, who sent me a piece of gold, and expressed a tender concern for my misfortunes and violent indisposition.

As soon as I was able to crawl, I went to pay my duty there, and was again relieved through his bounty, and might have returned to my place till something else had fallen out, but that his lordship was obliged to go suddenly out of England, which, as I had a child, was not suitable to either him or me.

Mr Yates's New Wells being open, and he having occasion for a singer in the serious part of an entertainment, called Jupiter and Alcmena, I was sent for to be his Mercury; and by the time that was ready for exhibition I began to be tolerably recovered: and a miracle indeed it was that I overcame a dreadful, spotted fever without the help of advice. Nor had I any remedy applied, except an emetic, prescribed and sent me by my sister Marples, who was the only relation I had that took any notice of me.

As I have no power of making her amends equal to my inclinations, I can only entreat the favour of my acquaintance in general, and those whom I have not the pleasure of knowing, whenever 'tis convenient and agreeable for them to use a neat, well-accommodated house of entertainment, they will fix a lasting

obligation on me by going to her's, which she opened last Thursday, the 20th instant,* in Fullwood's Rents, near Gray's inn; where they will be certain of flesh, fish, and poultry, dressed in an elegant manner, at reasonable rates; good wines, &c. and a politeness of behaviour agreeable to the gentlewoman, whose hard struggles through seas of undeserved misfortunes, will, I hope, be a claim to that regard I am certain she deserves, and will, wherever she finds it, most gratefully acknowledge.

For some few months I was employed, as before-mentioned, till Bartholomew fair; and, as I thought 'twould be more advantageous to me to be there,† obtained leave of Mr Yates to quit the Wells for the four days, and returned to him at the expiration thereof.

The rumour of my being in business having spread itself among my creditors, I was obliged to decamp, being too well assured my small revenue, which was but just sufficient to buy bread and cheese, would not protect me from a jail, or satisfy their demands. Had not my necessities been pressing, my service would not have been purchased at so cheap a rate; but thought I must have been everlastingly condemned, had I, through pride, been so repugnant to the laws of nature, reason, and maternal love, as to have rejected with insolent scorn this scanty maintenance, when I was conscious I had not sixpence in the world to purchase a loaf. I therefore found it highly necessary to set apart the remembrance of what I had been :

“I then was what I had made myself;”

and, consequently, obliged to submit to every in

* This was written in March 1755.

† Her pay at the Wells must have been very inconsiderable, for at the present time the players at the theatrical booths during Bartholomew fair, get but seven shillings each day: notice Dogget, Harper, &c.

convenience of life my misfortunes could possibly involve me in.

The amount of all I owed in the world did not arise to five-and-twenty pounds, but I was as much perplexed for that sum as if it had been as many thousands. In order to secure my person and defend myself from want, I joined with a man who was : master of legerdemain ; but, on my entering on an agreement with him, he commenced manager, and we tragedised in a place called Petticoat lane, near Whitechapel ; I then taking on me that darling name of Brown, which was a very great help to my concealment, and indeed the only advantage I ever received from it, or those who have a better claim to it.

But to my purpose. I soon grew tired of leading such a life of fear, and resolved to make trial of the friendship of my late uncle Shore, and wrote a melancholy epistle to him, earnestly imploring his assistance, for the sake of his deceased sister, my dear mother, to give me as much money as would be necessary to set me up in a public house. I told him I would not put it upon the foot of borrowing, as 'twas ten millions to one whether he might ever be repaid ; and, in case of failure of a promise of that nature, I knew I must of course be subject to his displeasure, therefore fairly desired him to make it a gift, if he thought my circumstances worthy his consideration ; which, to do him justice, indeed he did, and ordered me to take a house directly, that he might be assured of the sincerity of my intention.

I obeyed his commands the next day, and, as I have been in a hurry from the hour of my birth, precipitately took the first house where I saw a bill, and which, unfortunately for me, was in Drury lane, that had been most irregularly and indecently kept by the last incumbent, who was a celebrated dealer in murdered reputations, wholesale and retail.

This I, through a natural inadvertency, never con-

sidered, nor what ill consequences must reasonably attend so imprudent a choice of my situation. Choice I can't properly call it, for I really did not give myself time to make one, 'twas sufficient that I had a house; and rattled away, as fast as a pair of horses could gallop, to inform my uncle how charmingly I was fixed.

He, according to his word, gave me a bank note directly, and a sum of money in gold besides. Providence was merciful enough to afford me a decent quantity of patience to stay long enough to thank him in that respectful manner which duty obliged me to, and his bounty truly deserved; but, I remember, as soon as I got into the coach, I began to think the happiness I then enjoyed to be too great and too substantial to be true.

Having been so long the slave of misery and child of sorrow, it appeared to me like a dream; and I was in Nell Jobson's* condition on that score, who never wished, from a surmise of exactly the same kind, ever to wake again. I had not patience to go home, but stopped at a tavern to count my money, and read my note as often, I believe, as there were shillings in each separate pound, till o' my conscience, I had enumerated every shilling in imagination to a pound.

The first thing I did was to hasten to my principal creditor, who, by the by, had issued out a writ against me a month before, but was, through a fruitless search, obliged to drop his action; though really the man was so goodnatured as to hope I would consider the expenses he had been at on that account, and that not finding me had put him to a supererogatory charge, which I was undoubtedly strangely obliged to him for! As a proof how much I thought myself so, I begged the favour of him to give me a receipt for the money, and when he could prevail upon a reprieved criminal to pay for the erecting of

* In the 'Devil to Pay.'

Tyburn tree, because he was not hanged there, he should be perfectly assured of all costs he had been at in tenderly endeavouring to confine me in a prison.

The chap, I believe, was glad of his money, but cursedly vexed he had not staid till the report of an amendment of my circumstances, which would have run me to an equal expense of the debt, through the unnecessary charges the dear man would have put me to.

When I had given this Cerberus a sop, I flew with impatient joy to all the brokers in town to buy household furniture, gave the asking price for everything I bought, and in less than three hours my house was thoughtlessly furnished with many things I had no real occasion for.

I dare answer for it that some delicate old maid or prudent wife, will bless themselves at this strange recital; and, with vacant uplifted eyes, thank heaven I was no relation of theirs: that they did not wonder such an inconsiderate wretch should be so unhappy! When, poor devils! the same fate would have drawn equal incumbrances upon their gravities, and perhaps without the advantage of spirits to surmount them, as I have done; for which,

“Thank heaven alone.”

I hope, as I have been often deservedly, and sometimes undeservedly the motive of laughter in others, I may be allowed to come in for my share; and beg to inform the town, that I can as heartily join with them in that respect as they could wish, and more than they may probably expect.

But this affair was attended with such numerous unaccountable proceedings, I can't blame anybody for being thrown into a speechless astonishment. As for example—As soon as I had cluttered an undistinguishable parcel of goods into my house, which was after the hour of five in the evening, I resolved to lie there that night. Beds were to be put up, and

everything ranged in proper order. By the time these matters were accomplished, I was forced to forego my resolution of sleeping there that night, it being near six in the morning before I could advance to my repository : where, when I was imagined to take my rest, my impatient and elevated spirits would not let me continue till the reasonable hour of rising throughout the neighbourhood ; but, through excess of joy, I arose, and contrived fresh means to unlade me of part of the treasure my uncle had possessed me of.

I dare venture to affirm, I had not been two days and a half in the house before 'twas opened ; and, as is customary on such occasions, gave away an infinity of ham, beef, and veal, to every soul who came and called for a quart of beer, or a single glass of brandy. The faces of many of them I never saw before or since ; but was, from the number of people that came the first day, fully convinced that I should carry on a roaring trade ; though I afterwards found I had successfully run myself out very near seven pounds, in less than twenty-four hours, to acquire nothing at all.

The next great help I had towards getting an estate, was the happiness of the unprofitable custom of several strolling actors, who were unfortunately out of business ; and though they had no money, I thought it incumbent on me, as they stiled themselves comedians, to credit them till they got something to do : not considering, when that happened, they might in all probability be many score miles out of my reach, which indeed proved to be the very case.

Another expedient towards the making my fortune, was letting three several rooms to as many different persons, but in principle were all alike, and conjunctive in the perpetration of my destruction, which I shall define in few words. One of the party has very narrowly escaped hanging, more from dint of mercy than desert : another reduced to common beggary, and lying on bulks, being so notorious a pilferer as to be refused admittance into the most abject, tottering

tenement in or about St Giles's: and the third is transported for life.

Very unfortunately for me, the water was laid into my cellar, and I having no design of doing injuries, suspected none; but found, too late, that my tap had run faster than the water-cock, and my beer carried in pails to the two pair of stairs and garrets, which too frequently set the house in an uproar, as the gentry, at poor Pilgarlick's expense, got themselves excessively drunk, and constantly quarrelled; insomuch, that they began at length to impeach one another, by distant hints and winks; assuring me that they believed 'twould be very proper to observe Mrs Such-a-one when she went about the house, what she carried up stairs. Presently the person of whom I was warned would come to me and give the same caution of the other; and, in about half an hour's time, the husbands of these people would come and do the same by each other.

These hints made me begin to be a little peery, and resolved to look round the house to see if anything was missing; in short, they had taken violent fancies to my very candlesticks and saucepans, my pewter terribly shrunk, and my coals daily diminished, from the same opportunity they had in conveying off my beer; and, as I kept an eating-house also, there was very often a hue and cry after an imaginary dog, that had run away with three parts of a joint of meat.

As my stock was thus daily and cruelly impaired, consequently my profits were not able to make up for the horrid deficiency; and, as I did not dare to make a second attempt on my uncle, I prudently resolved to throw up my house, before I ran myself into such inconveniencies, by endeavouring to keep it, I might not easily have overcome; so suddenly disrobed my own apartments of their furniture, and quitted 'em; on which the thieving crew were then obliged to disperse, being deprived of all future hopes of making me thus inhumanly their prey.

I must beg pardon of the reader for omitting a circumstance that happened about a year before I was thus intendedly settled by my uncle. Being, as I frequently was, in great distress, I went to see a person who knew me from my childhood, and though not in a capacity of serving me beyond their good wishes and advice, did their utmost to convince me, as far as that extended, how much they had it at heart to serve me; and upon enquiry into what means I proposed for a subsistence, I gave the good woman to understand there was nothing which did not exceed the bounds of honesty that I should think unworthy of my undertaking; that I had been so enured to hardships of the mind, I should think those of the body rather a kind relief, if they would afford but daily bread for my poor child and self.

The woman herself knew who I was, but her husband was an entire stranger, to whom she introduced me as a young gentleman of a decayed fortune; and, after apologizing for half an hour, proposed to her spouse to get me the waiter's place, which was just vacant, at one Mrs Dorr's, who formerly kept the King's Head, at Mary-la-bonne.

I thankfully accepted the offer, and went the next morning to wait on the gentlewoman, introduced by my friend's husband, and neither he nor Mrs Dorr in the least suspected who I was. She was pleased to tell me, she liked me on my first appearance; but was fearful, as she understood I was well born and bred, that her service would be too hard for me. Perceiving me to wear a melancholy aspect, tenderly admonished me to seek out for some less robust employment, as she conjectured that I should naturally lay to heart the impertinence I must frequently be liable to from the lower class of people, who, when in their cups, pay no regard either to humanity or good manners.

I began to be half afraid her concern would make her talk me from my purpose; and, not knowing which way to dispose of myself, begged her not to be under the least

apprehensions of my receiving any shock on that account; that notwithstanding I was not born to servitude, since misfortunes had reduced me to it, I thought it a degree of happiness that a mistaken pride had not foolishly possessed me with a contempt of getting an honest livelihood, and chusing rather to perish by haughty penury, than prudently endeavour to forget what I had been, and patiently submit to the severities of fortune, which at that time was not in my power to amend.

To be short, the gentlewoman bore so large a share in my affliction, she manifested her concern by a hearty shower of tears; and, as she found I was anxious for a provision with her, we agreed, and the next day I went to my place; but when I informed her I had a daughter about ten years of age, she was doubly amazed; and the more so to hear a young fellow speak so feelingly of a child.

She asked me if my wife was living? I told her no; that she died in child-bed of that girl, whom she insisted should be brought to see her next day, and entertained the poor thing in a very genteel manner, and greatly compassionated her and her supposed father's unhappiness.

I was the first waiter that was ever permitted to sit at table with her; but she was pleased to compliment me, that she thought my behaviour gave me a claim to that respect, and that it was with the utmost pain she obliged herself to call me anything but 'sir.'

To her great surprise, she found me quite a handy creature; and, being light and nimble, tripped up and down stairs with that alacrity of spirit and agility of body that is natural to those gentlemen of the order of the tap-tub; though, as Hob says, we sold all sorts of wine and punch, &c.

At length Sunday came, and I began to shake in my shoes for fear of a discovery, well knowing our house to be one of very great resort, as I found it, for I waited that day upon twenty different companies,

there being no other appearance of a male, except myself, throughout the house, exclusive of the customers; and, to my violent astonishment, not one soul among 'em all that knew me.

Another recommendation of me to my good mistress, was my being able to converse with the foreigners who frequented her ordinary every Sabbath-day, and to whom she was unable to talk but by signs; which I observing, prevented her future trouble, by signifying in the French tongue I perfectly well understood it. This was a universal joy round the table, which was encompassed by German peruke-makers and French tailors, not one of whom could utter one single syllable of English.

As soon as Mrs Dorr heard me speak French, away she ran with her plate in her hand, and, laughing, left the room to go down and eat an English dinner; having, as she afterwards told me, been obliged once a week to dine pantomimically, for neither she or her company were able to converse by any other means.

When I came down with the dishes, I thought the poor soul would have eat me up; and sent as many thankful prayers to heaven as would have furnished a saint for a twelvemonth, in behalf of the man who brought me to her. Her overjoy of her deliverance from her foreign companions wrought a generous effect on her mind, which I had a convincing proof of by her presenting me with half-a-crown, and made many encomiums I thought impossible for me ever, in such a sphere of life, to be capable of deserving.

In regard to my child, I begged not to be obliged to lie in the house, but constantly came to my time in a morning, and stayed till about ten or eleven at night; and have often wondered I have escaped without wounds or blows from the gentlemen of the pad, who are numerous and frequent in their evening patrols through these fields, and my march extended as far as Long Acre, by which means I was obliged to pass through the thickest of 'em. But heaven everlast-

ingly be praised! I never had any encounter with 'em; and used to jog along with the air of a raw, unthinking, penniless 'prentice, which I suppose rendered me not worthy their observation.

In the week-days, business (though good) was not so very brisk as on Sundays, so that when I had any leisure hours I employed them in working in the garden, which I was then capable of doing with some small judgment; but that and everything else created fresh surprise in my mistress, who behaved to me as if I had been rather her son than her servant.

One day as I was setting some Windsor beans, the maid came to me, and told me she had a very great secret to unfold, but that I must promise never to tell that she had discovered it. As I had no extraordinary opinion of her understanding or her honesty, I was not over anxious to hear this mighty secret, lest it should draw me into some premunire; but she insisted upon disclosing it, assuring me 'twas something that might turn to my advantage if I would make a proper use of it. This last assertion raised in me a little curiosity, and I began to grow more attentive to her discourse; which ended in assuring me, to her certain knowledge, I might marry her mistress's kinswoman, if I would pay my addresses, and that she should like me for a master extremely, advising me to it by all means.

I asked her what grounds she had for such a supposition? To which she answered, she had reasons sufficient for what she had said, and I was the greatest fool in the world if I did not follow her advice. I positively assured her I would not, for I would not put it in the power of a mother-in-law to use my child ill; and that I had so much regard, as I pretended, to the memory of her mother, I resolved never to enter into matrimony a second time.

Whatever was the motive, I am entirely ignorant of, but this insensible mortal had told the young woman that I intended to make love to her: which

had I really been a man would have never entered in my imagination, for she had no one qualification to recommend her to the regard of anything beyond a porter or a hackney-coachman. Whether she was angry at what I said to the wench in regard to my resolution against marrying, or whether it was a forgery of the maid's, of and to us both, I cannot positively say ; but a strangeness ensued, and I began to grow sick of my place, and stayed but a few days after.

In the interim somebody happened to come who hinted that I was a woman ; upon which madam, to my great surprise, attacked me with insolently presuming to say she was in love with me, which I assured her I never had the least conception of. " No, truly ; I believe," said she, " I should hardly be 'namour'd with one of my own sect : " upon which I burst into a laugh, and took the liberty to ask her if she understood what she said ? This threw the offended fair into an absolute rage, and our controversy lasted for some time ; but in the end I brought, in vindication of my own character, the maid to disgrace, who had, uncalled-for, trumped up so ridiculous a story.

Mrs Dorr still remained incredulous in regard to my being a female ; and though she afterwards paid me a visit, with my worthy friend (at my house in Drury lane) who brought my unsuccessful letter back from my father, she was not to be convinced, I happening on that day to be in the male habit, on account of playing a part for a poor man, and obliged to find my own clothes.

She told me she wished she had known me better when I lived with her, she would on no terms have parted with her man Charles, as she had been informed I was capable of being master of the ceremonies, in managing and conducting the musical gardens ; for she had a very fine spot of ground, calculated entirely for that purpose, and would have

trusted the care of it to my government. But 'twas then too late; which I am sorry for, on the gentlewoman's account, who might have been by such a scheme preserved in her house; from which, through ill-usage, in a short time after she was drove out, and reduced to very great extremities, even by those most nearly related to her; but I find 'tis become a fashionable vice, to proclaim war against those we ought to be most tender of; and the surest and only way to find a friend is to make a contract with the greatest stranger.

After I left my unfortunate mistress, I was obliged to look out for acting jobs, and luckily one soon presented itself. One Mr Scudamore, a serjeant of dragoons, who had been some years before a player, on his return from battle (where our royal youthful hero had immortalized his fame in his father's and country's defence) took the 'Recruiting Officer' for his benefit, played captain Plume, and engaged me for Sylvia; and also to write him a prologue on the occasion, which he spoke himself.

I don't pretend to have any extraordinary talents in regard to poetry in verse, or indeed in prose; but as it speaks the warmth of my heart towards the royal family, whose illustrious line may heaven to latest posterity extend! I will venture to insert what I wrote; and hope, though I am but an insignificant and humble subject, every true Briton will let my zeal plead an excuse for my deficiency in attempting so noble and glorious a theme.

FROM toils and dangers of a furious war,
Where groans and death successive wound the air;
Where the fair ocean, or the crystal flood,
Are died with purple streams of flowing blood,
I am once more, thank providence, restored,
Though narrowly escap'd the bullet and the sword
Amidst the sharpest terrors I have stood,
And smil'd at tumults for my country's good.
But where's the Briton dare at fate repine,
When our great William's foremost of the line?

With steady courage, dauntless he appears,
 And owns a spirit far beyond his years ;
 With wisdom, as with justice, he spur'd on,
 To save this nation from a papal throne.
 May gracious heav'n the youthful hero give
 Long smiling years of happiness to live :
 And Britons, with united voices, sing
 The noblest praises of their glorious king ;
 Who, to defend his country and its rights,
 Parted from him in whom his soul delights.
 Then with a grateful joy Britannia own,
 None but great George should fill the British throne.

Though my poetry may be lame, my design was good ; and as I am sensible it has no other merit than that, shall say no more about it, but that it was well received at the Haymarket theatre, and I was handsomely rewarded by the person whose benefit it was wrote for.

I must acknowledge the story of my situation at Mary-la-bonne is not properly ranged in my history according to the time it happened ; but as it made up the number of my oddities, I have made bold to hawl it in, as I think it is as remarkable as any other part of my life before-mentioned.

After I left my house (which my uncle's kind pail of milk enabled me to go into, though soon after kicked down by his ridiculous marriage) I went to the Haymarket, where my brother revived the tragedy of 'Romeo and Juliet ;' and would have succeeded by other pieces he got up, in particular by the run of 'Cymbeline,' but was obliged to desist by virtue of an order from the lord chamberlain. I imagine, partly occasioned by a jealousy of his having a likelihood of a great run of the last mentioned play ; and which would of course have been detrimental, in some measure, to the other houses.

While we were permitted to go on, my brother and I lived together, where I passed my time both cheerfully and agreeably : and 'tis no compliment to own, the pleasure and advantage I reaped from his

daily conversation was the foundation of that pleasing content I enjoyed whilst he was a resident of that theatre.

But as my happiness was never of very long duration, my brother was invited, on the suppression, to Covent garden theatre, and I was left to make the best I could, with the remaining few who had a mind to try their fortunes with me: and, indeed, to do my brother justice, he promised me I should have the advantage of his daughter Jenny's performance, as I was left suddenly, and in distress.

As she was a promising actress in a tender, soft light, I designed to set her forth to the best advantage, and there was nothing wanting but her father's presence to carry everything on as orderly as before: though his going was the only means that rendered it practicable for me to keep the house open; for, when he was removed,

“ We did our safety to our weakness owe,
“ As grass escapes the scythe by being low.”

Yet I was determined, had my niece remained with me, to have been as industrious as possible, both for her sake and my own; and, as I had appeared in some first characters, was resolved to endeavour at filling up all those with which she was most concerned, as our figures were agreeably matched; I being but of the bulk and stature of most of our modern fine gentlemen, and Miss Jenny, who was a growing girl of sixteen, exactly tallied with me in that respect.

When my brother governed the theatre, he got up ‘The Conscious Lovers,’ which we played four nights successively to full houses; in which I appeared in the character of Young Bevil, the child in Indiana, and her father in Tom.

As I had been not only endured, but really well received in such a part, during my brother's reign, I could not conceive that his throwing up the reins of

empire could lessen me in the esteem of the good-natured part of the town, who had been kind enough to afford me, perhaps, more than my share of applause: but 'twas otherwise thought by some of my dear friends, who prevailed on my father to send his positive commands to his son to withdraw his daughter, on pain of his displeasure.

I was then reviving an old play, called 'Pope Joan,' in which I afterwards exhibited that character to a dreadful house; which I partly attribute to being deprived of my niece, who was to have performed the part of Angeline. When the bills were up, and her name not there, all those who were fond of seeing and encouraging her growing genius, sent back their tickets, with various excuses for their non-attendance; and 'twas debated in the family, 'Twould be a scandal for her to play with such a wretch as I was; 'twas letting her down to be seen with me, as her father was not there to keep her in countenance.

I should be glad to know what mighty degree of theatrical dignity the harmless child was possessed of preferable to myself, as a player! I was, when even under age, received in capital characters at Drury lane, where I made my first appearance; and in such parts my riper judgment makes me tremble to think I had, only with an uncultivated genius, courage enough to undertake.

In regard to her birth, I presume I was upon a par with her, as her grandfather's daughter and her father's sister. The only disgrace was, my being under misfortunes; the very worst reason for my family's contributing to a perpetration of that which nature and humanity should rather have excited 'em to have helped me to overcome.

In respect to an improvement in her business, I was thought worthy to instruct her in the part of Indiana, which another of her aunts can testify the truth of, who came with her into my own apartment several days for that purpose.

I suppose the reason of an application to me on that account proceeded from my brother's hurry of business, which prevented his doing it. There could be no other motive; for I am certain there was no mortal in the universe more capable of leaving the impressions of any character whatever, on the minds of those who were endowed with the necessary talents to receive 'em.

I don't mention this with the least tincture of disregard to the dear child, for I am well assured she would have been glad to have rendered her abilities useful to her unfortunate aunt: and I dare say, unless her principles are perverted (which, for her own sake, I hope are not) she still retains in her heart a secret pity for my sufferings; though to avow it might perhaps hazard the forfeiture of that blessing, heaven has been pleased to make her grandfather the happy instrument of bestowing; which I would not for the universe be the miserable motive of, therefore shall not only excuse, but even advise her to think, as some other relations do, that I am a stranger to her blood.

'Tis plain the rancorous hate to me had spread itself to so monstrous a degree, that they rather chose to make themselves, I may say in this case, ridiculously cruel, than not load me with an additional weight or misery. The low malice of taking away the child, as I had her father's consent, I put upon the level of school-boys' understandings, who quarrel with their play-fellow from a jealousy of one's having more plumbs in his cake than t'other.

Had she staid, it might have been useful to both: as time, experience, and observation, had furnished me with some little knowledge of the stage, I would, to the extent of my power, have rendered it serviceable to my niece,; and I am confident she would, on her part, by her performance have been greatly beneficial to me.

As I am foolishly flattered, from the opinion of others, into a belief of the power of cultivating raw

and unexperienced geniuses, I design very shortly to endeavour to instruct those persons who conceive themselves capable of dramatic performances, and propose to make the stage their livelihood.

Some very good friends of mine have lately advised me to this scheme, which I shall put in force as soon I can with conveniency; and will, on reasonable terms, three times a week, pay constant attendance from ten in the morning till eight in the evening, at my intended academy where ladies and gentlemen shall be, to the utmost of my power, instructed both in the art of speaking and acting; that though they should never come upon the stage, they shall be enabled even to read a play more pleasingly to the auditor, by a few necessary hints, than 'tis likely they ever would without 'em.

If I should qualify those who may design to offer themselves to the theatres, in such a manner as may render them worthy the manager's acceptance, I shall receive a double satisfaction, both in regard to my pupils' advancement, and rendering my academical nursery useful to the masters of both houses, by a cultivation of a good genius; which has been often thrown away, like a piece of fertile ground overrun with weeds, through neglect or want of good husbandry.

When this narrative is ended, I shall advertise to that purpose in the daily papers; and must now beg leave to apologise for swelling out my numbers with my own history, which was originally designed to have consisted only of a short sketch of my strange life: but, on the appearance of the first number, I was enjoined (nay 'twas insisted on) by many, that if 'twas possible for me to enlarge the account of myself to a pocket volume, I should do it.

In compliance with so obliging a request, which I receive as a compliment from my good friends, I have deferred the publication of Mr Dumont's history till this is finished; and I hope that, though the town is

not so well acquainted with the above mentioned gentleman, they will be equally curious to become so with his story as they have been with mine; and I dare promise, that 'twill afford them such a satisfaction in the reading, they won't repent their encouragement of the author.

As morality is the principal foundation of the work, I venture to recommend it to the perusal of the youthful of both sexes, as each will find a character worthy their observation, and I hope won't blush to make their example.

I intended to have made writing my support, if possible, when I was dispossessed of the happiness of getting my bread with my brother; but my cares increasing, I had not time to settle myself properly, or collect my mind for such an undertaking, therefore was obliged to decline it, and trust to providence from time to time for what I could get by occasionally acting.

Though I was unfortunate in the main, yet once in five or six weeks something or other generally happened to relieve my afflicted spirits; and I met with two cards running that turned up trumps, which led me into an imaginary hope that the measures of my griefs were so completely filled, that 'twas probable they would contain no more.

The first of these unexpected joys arose from the tender compassion of his late grace the duke of Montague; who, having been told of my hapless fortune, gave so tender an attention to it, it encouraged the person who related it to advise me to write to his grace.

I instantly did; and, without the least trouble of obtaining admission for the messenger or letter, was relieved with several guineas, enclosed in a line of soft commiseration, under the bounteous hand of my noble benefactor; the honour of which, notwithstanding my poverty, afforded me a more elevated transport than the liberal donation; and naturally claims a

real sorrow for his loss, attended with a grateful and sincere respect for his memory to the last hour of my existence, to which he has a right from hundreds more besides myself; having been a universal physician and restorer of peace and comfort to afflicted minds, variously oppressed.

This comfort was, in about two days, succeeded by an engagement with the late unfortunate Mr Russel, who was then a man of vogue, and in universal favour with every person of quality and distinction. This gentleman had an Italian opera at Mr Hickford's great room, in Brewer street, exhibited by puppets; which I understanding the management of, and the language they sung, was hired, after the first night's performance, at a guinea per diem, to move his Punch in particular.

This affair was carried on by subscription, in as grand a manner as possible. Ten of the best hands in town completed his band of music, and several of the female figures were ornamented with real diamonds, lent for that purpose by several persons of the first quality.

During the short run, I was in respect of my salary (which was paid me every day of performance) extremely happy; but so unfortunately circumstanced, I was forced to set out between five and six o'clock in the morning, traversing St James's park till Mr Hickford's maid arose; and for security staid there all day, mingling with the thickest of the crowd at night to get home.

The benefaction of my noble friend, and Mr Russel's salary, enabled me to new rig myself and child; that is, upon the score of redemption. But this flowing tide of joy soon came to an ebb, both with my friend and self; for in a few months after I heard the unpleasing tidings of his being under confinement in Newgate for debt.

Compassion led me to visit him there, though I had not power to deliver him from that dismal abode, but

in my wishes : though afterwards had he taken my advice he might possibly have proved me a friend by endeavouring to extricate him, in bringing on the Haymarket stage a humorous piece of his own composing ; which I believe is still in the hands of some of his creditors, where 'tis of no use to the person who possesses it ; but, as it has merit, might be rendered so, if properly disposed of.

I offered this unhappy gentleman to provide performers, with my own service inclusive, and to take the entire management of it upon myself, without fee or reward, unless his nightly receipts empowered him to gratify me for my trouble ; which, had he but been barely set free, I should have thought myself amply rewarded in being partly the happy instrument.

As to the money, I told him I would have nothing to do with it ; that door and office keepers should be of his own providing, but that if I engaged the people they should be nightly paid, according to the agreement I should make with them ; and for myself, would, if the thing succeeded, leave it to his generosity to reward me as he thought proper, which I make no doubt would have been done in the genteelest manner, had the affair been brought to any issue.

But this distressed gentleman was madly exasperated with the terrible and sudden revolution of his fortune, and instead of receiving my offered friendship with that regard a reasonable person might have thought it deserved, he rather seemed offended at the proposal ; which startled me at first, but on our farther conversation I was convinced of his growing misfortune, and too plainly perceived that he was not entirely in his senses ; on which I dropt the discourse, and, with a real concern, left him that evening, but returned to see him in about two days, when instead of finding him in a more settled order, he was absolutely changed from the man of sense to the drivelling idiot, nor was there the least consistency in one single syllable he uttered.

I found myself too much shocked to lengthen my visit; and more so, when I gathered from him an account, delivered with heart-breaking sighs and bitter sobs, that a person he had entrusted to raise a contribution for him among the nobility had run away with the bounty intended for his relief; and which would have more than effected it, as there was upwards of a hundred pounds amassed for that purpose.

This piteous narration was recounted to me afterwards by a gentleman who was his intimate friend, and had served him to the extent of his power through the whole scene of misery that ended him.

In about a fortnight after my interview with him in Newgate, passing through, I called to know how he did, and was informed he was removed by a *habeas* to the Fleet. As it lay in my way, I stopped there and enquired after him; upon which I was desired to walk up two pair of stairs, and in such a room I should find him.

I expressed to the persons who directed me, a great concern for him, and they as naturally answered, 'twas very kind and very good in me, and desired me very civilly to walk up, which accordingly I did; and, after having rambled into several people's rooms through mistake, I arrived at that where Mr Russel's remains only were deposited, for he was absolutely in a coffin, which some friend had sent in respect to him.

I conceive a description of my surprise on this account quite unnecessary, but I really for some time was very near as motionless as the deceased person, and in my heart very angry with the woman who sent me up to him without informing me he was dead.

When I came down, she very reasonably excused herself, by reminding me that the tenor of our discourse consisted of nothing more than a tender concern on my side for the unhappy gentleman; and she concluded that friendship and curiosity had brought me there to see his sad remains, he having been dead two days, and therefore she thought I knew it.

I assured her I did not, and farther told her I was pleased to see he had so handsome a shroud and coffin: but she shocked me excessively by telling me, he was to be removed out of the one and disrobed of the other, to be put into one provided by the parish: for 'twas a law, when a debtor died without any effects or means to satisfy their creditors, they must be so interred, otherwise an indulgence of being buried by friends rendered the warden of the Fleet liable to pay all the debts of the deceased, if it could be proved that he had suffered it.—'Tis a hard case notwithstanding, that humanity should not extend itself even to the dead, without hurting those whose principles of christianity excite them to it.

Thus ended the life of one who was universally admired, and had been for some time as much the fashion in families as their clothes: but, alas! misfortunes are too apt to wear out friendship, and he was cast off in two or three months with as much contempt, as an old coat made in Oliver Cromwell's time.

Though it was represented to his acquaintance, how cruelly he had been used by the person he intrusted to solicit them in his behalf, it was scarce believed, even by those who not long before had laid him nearest to their hearts. This is one very remarkable instance of the uncertainty of friendship, and the instability of people's minds who are only fashionably kind.

I was in hopes, after Mr Russel's death, to have got his figures upon reasonable terms, and have taken them into the country, as they were very small, and rather an incumbrance to one who did not understand how to make use of them; but, when I made an enquiry into the price of them, his landlord valued them at threescore guineas, and the money down.

That last assertion soon ended my project, as the reader may conceive; so I engaged myself at May fair, and lived on my profits there till the ensuing

Bartholomew; from thence I went into the country, where I remained, till last Christmas, for very near nine years.

My first expedition was to Sunning hill, where I had the joy of playing captain Plume, and blending it with the part of Sylvia. The lady who should have represented it, as I suppose, was so strongly affected with the death of her brother Owen, she was not able to speak a plain word, or indeed to keep her ground.

This gave me an early touch of the quality of strollers, and would soon have brought me back again, but that 'twas rather convenient than otherwise to keep out of town: but, alas! this was trifling to what I afterwards beheld. I have seen an emperor "as drunk as a lord," according to the old phrase, and a lord as elegant as a ticket-porter: a queen with one ruffle on, and lord Townly without shoes, or at least but an apology for them.

This last circumstance reminds me of the queen in Dryden's 'Spanish Friar' once playing without stockings; though I must do the person justice to say, it proceeded from an unprecedented instance of even a superfluity of goodnature, which was excited by her majesty's observing Torrismond to have a dirty pair of yarn stockings, with above twenty holes in sight; and, as she thought her legs not so much exposed to view, kindly strips them of a pair of fine cotton, and lends them to the hero. I played Lorenzo, and, having no business with the queen, had a mind to observe how she acquitted herself in her part, being a person I had known many years, and was really anxious for her success. I found she spoke sensibly, but to my great surprise observed her to stoop forward, on which I concluded she was seized with a sudden fit of the cholic, but she satisfied me of the contrary; and on her next appearance I remarked that she sunk down very much on that side I stood between the scenes, on which I then conjectured her to be troubled with a sciatic pain in her side, and made a second

enquiry, but was answered in the negative on that score; upon which I desired to know the reason of her bending forward, and sideling so? She told me 'twas a trick she had got. "'Tis a very new one then," said I, "for I never saw you do so before;" but I began to suspect something was the matter, and resolved to find it out. Presently the royal dame was obliged to descend from the stage into the drawing-room, and made a discovery, by the tossing up of her hoop, of a pair of naked legs.

I own I was both angry and pleased. I was concerned to find my friend's humanity had extended so far as to render herself ridiculous, besides the hazard she ran of catching cold; but must confess I never saw so strong a proof of goodnature, especially among travelling tragedizers; for, to speak the truth of them, they have but a small share of that principle subsisting amongst them.

If a person is but a lame hand, he or she is despised for that; and 'tis a common rule, when benefits come on, to say among their different parties (which they all herd in) Mr and Mrs such-a-one, to be sure, will have a great house, meaning perhaps the manager and his wife, who very often are the worst in the whole set: and 'tis very seldom that one couple shall both prove good, but the merit of the one is forced to make up for the deficiency of the other.

The least glimmering or shade of acting, in man or woman, is a sure motive of envy in the rest; and if their malice can't persuade the townspeople into a dislike of their performance, they'll cruelly endeavour to taint their characters; so that I think going a strolling, is engaging in a little dirty kind of war, in which I have been obliged to fight so many battles, I have resolutely determined to throw down my commission: and to say truth, I am not only sick, but heartily ashamed of it, as I have had nine years' experience of its being a very contemptible life; rendered so through the impudent and ignorant be-

haviour of the generality of those who pursue it; and I think it would be more reputable to earn a groat a day in cinder-sifting at Tottenham court, than to be concerned with them.

'Tis a pity that so many who have good trades should idly quit them to become despicable actors, which renders them useless to themselves, and very often nuisances to others. Those who were bred up in the profession have the best right to make it their calling; but their rights are horribly invaded by barbers' prentices, tailors, and journeyman weavers; all which bear such strong marks of their professions, that I have seen Richard the Third murder Henry the Sixth with a shuttle, and Orestes jump off the shop-board to address Hermione.

Another set of gentry who have crept into their community, are servants out of place; and I very lately saw the gallant Marcian as well rubbed and curried, as ever the actor did a horse in his master's stable. This worthy wight having the happiness to write an exceeding fine hand, and living formerly with a gentleman in one of the inns of court, wisely palms himself upon strangers for a lawyer, when his real and original profession was that of a groom.

How such sort of people, without the help of at least a little education, can presume to pick the pockets of an audience is to me astonishing, though they have the vanity and assurance to say they please, but 'tis only themselves; and were the spirits of departed poets to see their works mangled and butchered as I have too often been a melancholy witness of, they would certainly kick the depredating heroes out of this world into the next.

I have had the mortification of hearing the characters of Hamlet, Varanes, Othello, and many more capitals, rent in pieces by a figure no higher than two sixpenny loaves, and a dissonancy of voice which conveyed to me a strong idea of a cat in labour; all which conjoined with an injudicious utterance, made

up a complete tragical emetic for a person of the smallest degree of judgment: and yet these wretches very impudently style themselves players; a name, let me tell them, when properly applied, is an honour to an understanding, for none can deserve that title who labour under the want of a very considerable share of sense.

In the course of my travels I went to Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, where an odd affair happened, which I beg leave to relate as follows:—

I happened to be taken violently ill with a nervous fever and lowness of spirits, that continued upon me for upwards of three years, before I was able to get the better of it. When I came to the before-mentioned town, I was so near death, that my dissolution was every moment expected; but, after my illness came to a crisis, I very slowly amended, and as soon as I could creep about the house was advised by my apothecary to ride out, if I was able to sit a horse.

As soon as I found myself capable of it, I followed his advice, and had one lent me for myself, and another for my friend, the good-natured gentlewoman who commiserated poor Torrismond's misfortunes, and to whom I am most infinitely and sincerely obliged for her tender care in nursing me in three years' illness without repining at her fatigue, which was uninterrupted, and naturally fixes on me a lasting grateful sense of the favour.

The person who furnished me with the horses was a reverend-looking elder, about sixty years of age, with a beautiful curling head of hair and florid complexion, that bespoke at once both admiration and respect. His temper was agreeable to his aspect, extremely pleasing, and his company entertaining; with which he often obliged me, while my friend attended her business of a play night.

After riding out two or three days, the old gentleman perceiving me to grow better, asked me if I liked the horse? which I told him I greatly approved, as it

was an easy and willing creature. He said, he was at my service. I very thankfully accepted the favour, and before many witnesses the present was made ; as also the other for my friend's use, which belonged to a young fellow he called his nephew.

He told me that if I thought proper to quit the stage, which he imagined, in my weak condition, was better avoided than pursued, he would take me to his estate, situate at a place called Brill, in Oxfordshire ; and, if I and my friend would stay with him as long as either he or we should live, I should be superintendant over his affairs abroad, and my friend should have the entire management of the family at home ; which he said consisted only of himself and nephew, and about seven or eight servants that were employed in husbandry, he being, as he informed us, a wealthy grazier.

'Twas soon resolved that we should give warning to Mr Linnett, who was manager of the company, to leave him at the expiration of a month. This was accordingly done ; and, as a confirmation of his intentions in taking us with him, gave Mrs Brown an old-fashioned gold necklace, with a large locket of the same metal, which altogether, I dare believe by the weight, could not be worth less than twenty pounds, there being several rows, and the beads not small.

I desired the old gentleman not to insist on her wearing it, till she went home. It being an old-fashioned thing, I knew, as an actress, people would stare to see her so equipped ; though it was a valuable gift, but more proper to ornament the neck of a country housewife, than a tragedy queen. I therefore desired him to keep it till we were settled ; and pretended, for fear of affronting him, that she might run a hazard in losing it of a play night. He thought my care was just, but insisted on her laying it up herself, and I luckily insisted he should have it in his possession till we went away.

The thoughts of being so well settled and provided for both our lives, was, in fact, greatly conducive towards the restoration of my health; and our friendship with the old gentleman daily increased, as also with his nephew, whom he frequently sent into different parts of the country after cattle; and, with the utmost ceremony, begged the favour of borrowing my horse; till he could send an order to Brill for another.

The least I could do was to comply with the request of so valuable a friend, and away went the nephew, who, at length, happened to stay three or four days longer than was intended, which gave his uncle a great deal of seeming uneasiness, that, to all appearance, was worked into a downright passion, with threats of cutting him off with a shilling, for rambling about when he had sent him upon business of weighty concern.

As I observed him to be very much out of humour, I thought it would be but a friendly part to endeavour to appease the uncle, for the nephew's sake, which the old man took very kindly of me, and bid me want for nothing that might be necessary toward the recovery of my health; assuring me, when Jemmy came home, fifty pounds should be at my service, to put to what use I pleased.

So generous an offer, unasked, made me conceive that this man was dropped from heaven, to be my kind deliverer from all the sorrows of life; but, before Mr James came back, there came a sudden order from the magistrate of the town, to insist on the old man's leaving it at a moment's warning, on pain of being sent to Gloucester jail, if he refused to obey.

In the interim, home comes the nephew, who received the same charge; but they huddled up their affairs in a strange manner, and ventured to stay three days longer, though very little seen.

This put my friend and self into a terrible consternation, for still we could neither of us arrive at

the real truth of the affair, till Mr Linnett, who had heard it from the towns-people, and with a frightened aspect and real concern came, almost breathless, to let me know that my pretended friends were positively gamblers and house-breakers; that if we listened any longer to them, we should be sure not only to be deceived, but in all human probability be made innocent sufferers for their guilt.

Mr Linnett's concern was expressed with all the symptoms of strong truth, which startled us both with fear and wonder, and made us heedfully attentive to all he related. We immediately gave up all right and claim to our horses, and my friend did the same to her gold necklace, all which were stolen goods; and, had she been seen with it about her neck by the right owner, 'tis possible the poor soul might have been provided with one of a rougher kind, and each of us disgracefully exalted, for being harmlessly credulous.

I afterwards found out, their scheme was to have got our boxes into their possession, which, as both the old and young man were frequent in their visits to play at cards with me, by way of amusement in my illness, they had observed were well furnished with very good linen, and my friend had just received a present of clothes from her relations. Had they got these into their possession they would have proved a tolerable booty.

But our better stars shone forth that time; and though we lost only an imaginary fortune we secured our lives, and the little all we were both worth upon the face of the earth.

In about a year after, the old man dangled into the next world upon a gibbet, either at Salisbury or Oxford, which, I cannot positively affirm, but that was his deserved fate; and the young one died raving mad in a prison, in or near London.

I thought proper to insert this story, not only as it is a particular occurrence of my life, but to warn the

undesigning part of the world of heedlessly falling into company of strangers, and being taken in by them.

This man, by his discourse and appearance, would have deceived a much wiser person than myself, as he really wore the venerable marks of bearded sanctity and wisdom; but his principles were as opposite to that description as an angel to a dæmon, having been upwards of forty years a noted gambler, pickpocket, and sometimes highwayman.

I often lift up my heart to heaven with grateful sense of its providential care of us, in preventing the dismal scenes of misery to which we should have been exposed had this wicked man perpetrated his design; and we might have been made innocent sacrifices to save his horrid life, through villany imposed, and branded with the guilt of crimes we never should have thought of committing: I therefore hope our fortunate escape will set others on their guard, who may be liable to an accident of the same kind.

When we left Cirencester we made a short progress to Chippenham, an agreeably situated market town in the road to Bath, where I met with many friends, as indeed I generally had the good fortune to do, go where I would; in particular Mr Thomas Stroud, who keeps the Angel inn, and Mr Lodge, master of the White Hart, were conjunctive in forwarding my interest: and I think, without compliment to either, they are remarkable for keeping two of the most elegant and best accommodated houses throughout Great Britain. A thing seldom known that one little market town should produce two such agreeable repositories for travellers, and I am very glad they meet with the success they deservedly enjoy.

From thence we took a short trip to a little village called Corsham, four miles distant from Chippenham; where we had little else to do than to walk out and furnish our keen stomachs with fresh air, and come home and gape at each other for want of a dinner.

Bad business is a sure means to produce ill blood in a company ; for, as they grow hungry, they naturally grow peevish, and fall out with one another, without considering that each bears a proportionable part of the distress, the manager excepted, who never fails, in all companies, to eat, as Bombardinian says,

“ Though all mankind should starve.”

This happening to be my case, I was refused a small, but needful supply, which occasioned a disagreeable argument ; and I wrote to Mr Richard Elrington to inform him, agreeable to an invitation I received some months before, upon his sending me three guineas, my friend, daughter, and self, would immediately join him.

Accordingly, as soon as the letter could reach him, which was as far as Tiverton in Devonshire, he dispatched a messenger on horseback, with two guineas and a half, and a letter full of joy with the hopes of my speedy arrival, which was no small advantage as the company then stood, as it consisted but of few hands, and one of the women so unfortunate, that she was dead drunk in bed the first night of their opening, when she should have been soberly employed in the performance of Lucy in ‘ The Beggars’ Opera.’ Mrs Elrington, who was perfect in all the characters in that piece, artfully contrived to double the parts of Polly and Lucy, which I suppose she must do, as Sosia represents himself and Alcmena, by the assistance of a lanthorn.

So dismal a disappointment naturally offended the audience, and their nightly receipts fell very short of their expectations from this disastrous chance, which reduced them to the necessity of playing three times a week at a little market town, called Columpton, within five miles of Tiverton, or at least attempting so to do, that they might have a probability of eating once in six days ; and a terrible hazard that was, for the Columpton audience never amounted to more

than twenty shillings at the fullest house, which, when the charges were paid, and the players, like so many hungry magpies, had gaped for their profits, might very possibly afford what they call a stock-supper, which was generally ended in a quarrel, by way of dessert.

That barbarous word merit has been the occasion of more feuds in those communities than the whole court of chancery can ever be able to decide, or his majesty's army overcome. I own it surprises me that a single syllable, which in itself is truly valuable, should be so constant an invader of the peace of those who, if I may judge by their abuse of it on the stage, are perfect strangers to its derivation, and not in the least relative to them who nightly claim an unlawful title to it.

However I shall, though I find fault with the multitude, do justice to those who deserve it. Mrs Elrington has the first demand on my judgment in that case among the travelling comedians. She has a great deal of spirit, and speaks sensibly. Her genius is calculated for low comedy entirely; and the smallness of her person, which rendered her unsuccessful in her attempt on Covent garden theatre, is no detriment on a country stage, as the difference of them is upon an equality with a mouse-trap and a mountain.

When we arrived at Tiverton they were gone for a night or two to their more rural retreat, and I, having a man and two horses to discharge, was really, with our keeping upon the road for near seventy miles, under some sort of confusion and concern, for want of the half-guinea which was short of our demands.

After some private consultation with my friend and daughter, who were both trembling with terrible apprehensions of some immunities arising from this misfortune, I took heart, and resolved to set the best face on the matter. As Mr Elrington was not present to receive us, I enquired what houses he used in town, and was, to my great joy, soon informed that there

was one in particular, the mistress of which was a great friend to him; on which I undauntedly set forward, and very luckily found the person to be the young man's mother who brought us the money into Wiltshire.

In Mr Elrington's name I borrowed the half-guinea, which to our general joy was immediately granted, and the man and horses discharged; though a second thought came into my head, that as the company was absent, and hearing but a terrible account of their progress there, I began to be doubtful whether their faith was strong enough to keep so many poor, pennyless devils from starving till their return, which I was told would not be so soon as they proposed, there being a play bespoke, to which they were promised a great house.

This gave me fresh spirits, and I thought it quite proper to engage our guide to walk the other five miles, and escort us to the players. The splendour of a shilling soon prevailed, and we mounted directly; my friend single, and my daughter and self double, upon a strapping beast, which was of a proper size to have been ranked in the number of dragoons.

I was not a little pleased, notwithstanding their ill success, to find Mr Elrington's credit so good, and his character so justifiable, that even in his absence a stranger could be intrusted on his account.

When we came to our journey's end, Mrs Elrington, who was the first person we saw, received us with inexpressible joy, and gave us a second relation of the miserable state of their affairs: but, as lady Grace says of lady Townly, she rallied her misfortunes with such vivacity, that had not her wit been too strong for my resolution, I should have certainly gone back again by the return of the next post.

As we were just entering the town, a good-looking farmer met us, by our appearance guessed what we were, and asked if we were not comedians? We answered in the affirmative, on which he desired, if

we had any pity for ourselves, to turn back, and rapping out a thundering oath, affirmed to us that we were going to starve, which threw my friend (who is not the best horseman in the world) into such a fright, she dropped her bridle, from which advantage her hungry steed fairly ran her into a hedge, and dropped her into the ditch.

When she recovered her surprise she was for going directly back, without seeing the company; but when I assured her the money would not hold out, she was prevailed on to go forward.

At length the bespoke play was to be enacted, which was 'The Beaux Stratagem;' but such an audience I dare believe was never heard of before or since. In the first row of the pit sat a range of drunken butchers, some of whom soon entertained us with the inharmonious music of their nostrils: behind them were seated, as I suppose, their unsizeable consorts, who seemed to enjoy the same state of happiness their dear spouses were possessed of; but, having more vivacity than the males, laughed and talked louder than the players.

Mrs Elrington (who played Mrs Sullen) having such a lovely prospect before her, and being willing to divert me from any design she might suspect of my not staying, in the drunken scene between Archer and Scrub (the former of which I played) unexpectedly paid us a visit; and, taking the tankard out of Scrub's hand, drank Mr Archer's health, and to our better acquaintance. The least I could do was to return the lady's compliment by drinking to hers; after which she ordered my brother Scrub to call the butler in with his fiddle, and insisted on my dancing a minuet with her, while poor Scrub comforted himself with the remains of the tankard.

This absurdity led us into several more, for we both took a wild-goose chase through all the dramatic authors we could recollect, taking particular care not to let any single speech bear in the answer the least

affinity; and, while I was making love from Jaffier, she tenderly approved my passion with the soliloquy of Cato.

In this incoherent manner we finished the night's entertainment. Mrs Sullen, instead of Archer, concluding the play with Jane Shore's tag, at the end of the first act of that tragedy, to the universal satisfaction of that part of the audience who were awake, and were the reeling conductors of those who only dreamt of what they should have seen.

For some time we dragged on our unsuccessful lives, without the least prospect of an alteration, that I at last gave up all hopes and expectations of ever enjoying a happy moment. This, according to the usual custom, made each wear an eye of coldness and dislike; till, after a long series of plagues, madam Fortune, in one of her frolics, was pleased to pay us a small visit, and during her short stay we began to be better reconciled, till the trumpery slut tucked up her tail of goodnature, and reduced us to our primitive nothing; and sour looks, with disaffected minds, resumed their empire in the breast of every malcontent.

In process of time we went to Cirencester, where I informed the reader I had been once before with Mr Linnett's company: but Mr Elrington, without any previous notice, took a place in the stage-coach for London, and, the very night we came to the town, left his wife to manage the company, in which I gave my assistance to take off from her as much of the trouble as I possibly could.

Mr Linnett, wanting at that time some auxiliaries, sent one of his company to engage me and my friend to join him at Bath, where he then was, in a new erected theatre in Kingsmead street. But my honour was so deeply engaged in Mrs Elrington's behalf, I would, on no terms, leave her, as she was pleased to compliment me with being her right-hand; and at that time not knowing the real design of her husband's going to London, looked on her as an injured

person, which doubly engaged my attachment to her interest: though I afterwards found it was a concerted scheme to fix himself, if possible, with Mr Rich; which proved almost abortive, he staying but one season, from what cause I shan't pretend to judge, and then went to Bath.

His wife soon followed, and I was left with six more besides myself. One scene and a curtain, with some of the worst of their wardrobe, made up the paraphernalia of the stage, of which I was prime minister; and, though under as many disadvantages as a set of miserable mortals could patiently endure, from the before-mentioned reasons, and an inexhaustible fund of poverty through the general bank of the whole company, even to a necessity of borrowing money to pay the carriage to the next town, we all went into a joint resolution to be industrious, and got a sufficiency to support ourselves and pay the way, not only to that town, but were decently set down in the next, with just enough to dismiss our waggoner with reputation; and were then left to proceed upon fresh credit, and contract the strongest friendship we could with each believing landlord.

As 'tis very common for even the lowest in understanding to fancy themselves judges of acting, I must give a curious specimen of it in a person who saw me, for want of a better, attempt the part of Hamlet. I was lucky enough to gain a place in his opinion; and he was pleased to express his approbation of me, by saying no man could possibly do it better, because I "so frequently broke out in fresh places."

But I had a much larger share of his esteem after playing Scrub, which was indeed infinitely more suitable to his taste, and left so strong an impression on his mind, that a night or two after, when I was tragedizing in the part of Pyrrhus, in Phillips's 'Distressed Mother,' he stepped from the pit, and desired me to oblige some of his friends, as well as himself, by mixing a few of Scrub's speeches in the play;

assuring me, it would give much more satisfaction to the spectators, though they liked me very well, he said, in the part I was acting.

This revived in my memory the curious performance at Columpton, and rendered me, for the rest of the night, infinitely a properer person for Scrub than Pyrrhus, as the strangeness of his fancy had such an effect on my risible faculties, I thought I should never close my mouth again in the least degree of seriousness.

I imagine it is such judges as these that occasion that indolent stupefaction in most travelling players; and, as the lower sort are foolish enough to be pleased with buffoonery in comedy, and bellowing in tragedy, without a regard to sense or nature in either, it makes them forgetful that there are among the country gentlemen and ladies very great judges, whose good nature overlooks those monstrous absurdities; but, at the same time, if they took more pains to please them, they would certainly find them more frequent in their visitation.

It is for want of this consideration in the players, which makes the favours they receive from families of distinction rather a charity, than a genteel reward, for, at best, their weak endeavours to entertain a set of sensible people, who would be glad to encourage the least spark of decency and industry.

I know this will be a kind of choke-pear to many of the travelling gentry, but I am under no sort of uneasiness on that account; and think, if they make a proper use of the hint, they will have more reason to thank me than be offended at it.

After traversing through some few towns more, Mr and Mrs Elrington rejoined their company, and we went to Minchin Hampton, in Gloucestershire, where we were kindly invited by the lord of the manor, a worthy gentleman, who was not only a great benefactor in respect of the business, but our guardian and protector from the terrible conse-

quences that might have ensued from a most shocking cruelty, designed for the company in general; but, luckily for the rest, only put in force against me and two more; which was, by dint of an information, encouraged by a C——r at S——d, who meanly supported a decayed relation, by procuring him a special warrant to apprehend all persons within the limits of the act of parliament.

This ignorant blockhead carried his authority beyond a legal power; for almost every traveller that went through the town was examined by him before they could pass freely, and often made sacrifices to his interest.

My landlord, who was a worthy wight likewise, was privy to the plot laid against us; though affected infinite concern when we were taken, and violently exclaimed against his partner in this contrivance, though they were equally concerned. The scheme was not intended to do justice in regard to the laws, but extort money from the players and the worthy gentleman, who, they were well assured, would stand by us in a case of extremity, as indeed he did. They carried on their process so far, as to take me and two of our men to jail, where we were not under the least apprehensions of going, from what my landlord had told us.

We waited in court, expecting every moment to be called upon and dismissed with a slight reprimand: but, alas! 'twas not so easy as we thought, for we were beckoned to the other end of the court, and told that the keeper of the prison insisted on our going into the jail, only for a show, and to say we had been under lock and key. An honour, I confess, I was not in the least ambitious of; and for the show, I thought 'twould never be over, for it lasted from nine in the morning till the same hour of the next; and had it not been for the generous and friendly assistance of the before-mentioned gentleman, I believe

it would have held out till doomsday with me, for another day must have absolutely put an end to my life.

Rage and indignation having wrought such an effect on my mind, it threw me almost into a frenzy, and arose to such a height, that I very cordially desired my fellow-prisoners would give me leave to cut their throats, with a faithful promise to do the same by my own, in case we were doomed to remain there after the trial.

They were sorry to see me, they said, so very much disconcerted, but could by no means comply with my request ; endeavouring, as much as possible, to keep up my spirits and bring me into temper.

Several times my landlord came backwards and forwards, giving us false hopes of our being every minute called upon. The last visit he made, I began to be quite outrageous, and told him all I conceived of him ; uttering several bold truths, not in the least to the advantage of his character.

Away he went grumbling, and I never saw him till the next morning, when he came to summon us to the hall. The evening wore apace, and the clock struck eight, the dreadful signal for the gates to be locked up for the night.

I offered half a guinea a-piece for beds, but was denied them ; and, if I had not fortunately been acquainted with the turnkey, who was a very good-natured fellow, we must have been turned into a place to lie upon the bare ground, and have mixed among the felons, whose chains were rattling all night long, and made the most hideous noise I ever heard, there being upwards of two hundred men and boys under the different sentences of death and transportation.

Their rags and misery gave me so shocking an idea, I begged the man, in pity, to hang us all three, rather than put us among such a dreadful crew. The very stench of them would have been a sufficient remedy against any future ills that could have happened to

me; but those dreadful apprehensions were soon ended by the young fellow who was our wardour for the night, making interest with a couple of shoemakers who were imprisoned in the women's condemned hole, which, till they came, had not been occupied for a considerable time.

These two persons were confined, one for debt, the other for having left his family, with a design to impose his wife and children on the parish.

Extremely glad were we to be admitted into the dismal cell, which, though the walls and flooring were formed of flint, at that time I was proud of entering, as the men were neat, and their bed (which my companions only, took part of) entirely clean.

The two gentlemen of the craft had, the day we were brought in, furnished themselves with each a skin for under-leathers, which, being hollow, one within the other, I chose for my dormitory, and having a pair of boots on and a great coat, rolled into my leather couch, secure from every evil that might occur from such a place, except a cold which I got, occasioned by the dampness of my bed-chamber.

As we were not there for any crime but that committed by those who informed against us, I had the good fortune to prevail on my friend the turnkey to permit me to send for candles and some good liquor, to reward our kind hosts, and preserve us from the dreadful apprehensions of getting each an ague in our petrified apartment.

I continued, for the most part of the night, very low-spirited and in very ill-humour, till I was roused by the drollery of one Mr Maxfield, my fellow-sufferer, a goodnatured man, and of an odd turn of humour, who would not let me indulge my melancholy, which he saw had strongly possessed me, and insisted, as he had often seen me exhibit captain Macheath in a sham prison, I should, as I was then actually in the condemned hold, sing all the bead-roll

of songs in the last act, that he might have the pleasure of saying, I had once performed in character.

I own I was not in a condition to be cheerful, but the tender concern of those about me laid a kind of constraint on me to throw off my chagrin, and comply with their request, which, when ended, I fairly fell asleep for about an hour, and dreamt of all the plagues that had tormented my spirits in the day.

As soon as the dawn of day appeared, I sat with impatient expectation of the turnkey's coming to let me into the fresh air; and, to do him justice, he came an hour earlier on my account to let us all look into the yard, which is formed into gravel-walks, not unlike Gray's inn gardens, though not kept up in that regular and nice order.

But rough as it was, I thought it comparable to the garden of Eden; and question much, when the first pair beheld their paradise, whether they were more transported at the view, than I was when let out of my cell.

After I had sauntered about for a quarter of an hour, deeply immersed in thought, down came the rattling crew, whose hideous forms and dreadful aspects gave me an idea of such horrors, which can only be supposed to centre in hell itself. Each had his crime strongly imprinted on his visage, without the least tincture of remorse or shame; and, instead of imploring for mercy, impudently and blasphemously arraigned the judgment of the power divine in bringing them to the seat of justice.

While I was surveying these miserable and dreadful objects, I could not possibly refrain from tears to see so many of my fellow-creatures entered volunteers in the service of that being which is hourly preying upon the weak and negligent part of mankind; and, as I too plainly saw, both age and infancy plunged in total undistinguished ruin.

About the hour of eight we received the pleasing news of our being ordered to appear in court at nine; and the joy of being removed, though but for a few

moments, from the sight of these unhappy wretches, was superior to that I felt when delivered from the torturing apprehension I had some years before of ending my life, by famine, in the Marshalsea.

But then the dread of being remanded back to prison suddenly gave a damp to my transport ; but, heaven be praised ! our kind benefactor sent in the night a special messenger to be ready in the sessions house, with a large quantity of gold, to protect us from any threatening danger.

I had not been in the pen five minutes, before I was called upon to receive a letter of comfort to myself and friends, who, though they assumed a gaiety the night before, were heartily shocked at appearing at the bar among a set of criminals, the least of whose crimes not one of them would have dared to have been guilty of, though but in thought.

However, we had the pleasure to see the wise judge (who, for dint of interest to his kinsman, committed us) march out of court just before our cause came on, which ended in a very few words, our kind protector having laid our plan of safety so securely with his interest and power, we were soon dismissed ; and can never, I think, be sufficiently grateful in our acknowledgments for so tender and generous a commiseration of our misfortunes.

'Twas a secret pleasure to us, to know that the coroner was obliged to walk off, having rendered himself so contemptible to the gentlemen on the bench, by dabbling in such dirty work, that he was not only heartily despised by them, but stood a ridiculous chance, if he had staid till our dismissal, of being hooted out of court : and I believe if he were to live to the age of Methuselah, this great action of his life would not be forgot.

'Tis no small comfort to me, that two of the best gentlemen in and about that place have dropped his acquaintance on the account, as they conceived a man of sense might have employed his time and thoughts

more laudably than in giving countenance and encouragement to an action which was founded upon avarice, not justice: for I can be upon oath, and bring many more to justify the truth of my assertion, that they brought in a bill of different charges to the amount of near twelve pounds, besides a quantity of guineas it cost the gentleman who stood our friend in the affair.

I have often heard of persons paying money to avoid a jail, but we were so cruelly imposed on they made us pay half-a-guinea a-piece for going into one; and, though we had but twelve post miles to ride, charged a guinea a head for conducting us to G——, besides the expenses of our horses, which they ought to have found us, as we were afterwards informed.

Power, when invested in the hands of knaves or fools, generally is the source of tyranny, which has been too often experienced: and had not our worthy friend stood firmly by us we must have innocently suffered, for labouring to keep ourselves just above the fears of starving.

As we were not guilty of any misdemeanor, every body pitied our distress, and heartily despised the author of it. Our friend, who gave us partly an invitation, as he was a person of great worth and power, was highly exasperated, and took it as a high indignity offered to himself, after he had given us encouragement, to presume to object against his entertaining his family (which was a numerous one) in an inoffensive manner; and which, as he reasonably urged, kept many an idle person from lavishing their substance at alehouses, equally destructive to their health and the interest of their wives and children.

On our return from G——, the gentleman bespoke a play, and removed us out of the little town-hall into the great one, which was his property; and in despite of our adversaries supported us with a firm promise to protect us, in case of a second invasion, if it cost him half his estate: but, as they knew his

power and resolution both invincible, they never attempted to molest us afterwards.

Our stay was but short after this unlucky stroke of fortune, though it was a bad matter well ended, thanks to the humanity of our generous friend. We were heartily glad when we left the place; and whenever I go to that, or any other, upon the same expedition, I'll give them leave to imprison me for every hour of life to come.

The autumn following, Mr Elrington and his spouse went again to Bath, and I was left as conductor to the company a second time. Just before they went, a plot was laid to draw us into another dilemma at Dursley, but we were upon our guard, and luckily escaped their persecution. In order to get quite out of their reach, we went into another county, to a town called Ross in Herefordshire, where we met with tolerable success, and from thence proceeded to Monmouth in Wales, which, though a very large place, we found it very difficult to get a bare livelihood.

Chepstow was our next station, where I met with many friends, particularly a widow lady, to whom, and her family in general, I am under great obligations, and shall ever with pride acknowledge.

I had the honour and happiness of obtaining the friendship of another lady, who lived within a quarter of a mile of Chepstow, and often favoured me with friendly letters when I went to Abergavenny, at the end of which town I left Mr Elrington, with a firm design, at that time, to quit all thoughts of playing.

I immediately took a very handsome house with a large garden, consisting of near three quarters of an acre of ground, belonging to my friend's papa, a very worthy gentleman, who had eminently distinguished himself in battle, in the reign of king William and queen Anne; but in the decline of life quitted the service and retired, having a very considerable state, to which his daughter is sole heiress.

Perhaps the reader may think, that the repeated

rebuffs of fortune might have brought me to some degree of reflection, which might have regulated the actions of my life, but, that I may not impose upon the opinions of the good-natured part of the world, who might charitably bestow a favourable thought on me in that point, I must inform them, that the aversion I had conceived for vagabondising, (for such I shall ever esteem it), and the good nature of my friends in Chepstow, put it strongly into my head to settle there, to which end I determined to turn pastry-cook and farmer; and, without a shilling in the universe, or really a positive knowledge where to get one, took horse from Abergavenny to visit the young lady and hire the house.

I must do her the justice to say she advised me to forego my resolution, and set before me all the inconveniences I afterwards laboured under; but she found me so determined, she dropped her argument, and, being of an obliging temper, forwarded the repairing of the house, that it might be ready at the appointed time for my reception.

To be short, I went to it; but, that the whole scene of my unaccountable farce might be complete, I not only involved myself, but the gentlewoman whom I have before-mentioned, that travelled with me, in the same needless and unreasonable difficulties; for which I think myself bound in honour to ask her pardon, as I really was the author of many troubles from my inconsiderate folly, which nothing but a sincere friendship and an uncommon easiness of temper could have inspired her either to have brooked or to have forgiven.

As soon as I arrived at Chepstow I began to consider, that though I had got a house without either bed or chair to lie or sit on, it would be highly proper to seek out a place of rest; and, that I might live as cheap as possible, took a ready-furnished lodging for nights, and wandered for a fortnight up and down my empty house, till fortune came that road to drop some furniture into it.

I own it, I was secretly chagrined at my exploit, but did not dare to make the least discovery of it to Mrs Brown, who had very justifiable reasons to reproach me for an indiscretion she had prudently taken much pains to prevent.

My first design was to set forth in pastry : 'tis true I had an oven, but not a single penny to purchase a faggot to light it ; and for the materials to make the pies they were equally uncomeatable. But I took courage, and went to inform the widow lady of my intention and entreat the favour of her custom.

As she is, without compliment, a person of sense and discernment, she very humorously asked me all the natural and necessary questions concerning the motive and means by which I was to settle myself, as she well knew I had not a grain of the principal ingredient towards exciting me to such a resolution, or the effecting it.

I confess I was strangely puzzled to answer her ; and, after several hums and haws, told her I hoped fortune would favour my design, as I only wanted to get an honest and decent living, which was no small recommendation to her favour. After having smiled at my rash undertaking, she administered that kind of comfort I stood most in need of that time.

To baking we went, and, partly through pity and curiosity, we took twenty shillings the first day. I then began to triumph greatly at my success, and thought it my turn to upbraid my friend for having reproached me for leaving the stage.

I must not forget to insert a strong desire I had to go to the major on the strength of my success, and hire a large field of grass, and, instead of a bed, thought of purchasing a horse to carry goods to the neighbouring markets ; but, that I might not appear more conspicuously ridiculous than I had done, Mrs Brown wisely dissuaded me from such a mad scheme and a few weeks convinced me I had no occasion for such a chargeable conveyance of my pastry : for

when everybody's curiosity was satisfied, I found a terrible declension of business.

However, I met with unprecedented friendships, especially from Val——ne M——s, esq. who lives at P——d, a young gentleman of a fair character and fine estate. His generosity enabled me to put the main part of my furniture into my house; and, as to linen, and many necessary materials besides, my good friend, the young lady before-mentioned, supplied me with them.

As I found one business fall off, I resolved to set up another, and went in one of my extraordinary hurries to buy a sow with pig; but, to my great disappointment, after having kept it for near three months, expecting it hourly to bring forth, it proved to be an old barrow: and I, to make up the measure of my prudent management, after having put myself to double the expense it cost me in the purchase, was glad to sell it to a butcher for a shilling or two less than I gave for it.

Thus ended my notion of being a hog merchant, and I having a garden well stored with fruits of all sorts, made the best I could of that, till some villanous wretches, in one night's time, robbed me of as much as would have yielded near three guineas, besides barbarously tearing up the trees by the roots, and breaking the branches through fearful haste; being well assured that the gentleman who owned them would have punished them to the utmost rigour of the law, had they been discovered.

One plague succeeding another, I resolved to leave the place and try my fate in some other spot; but, behold! we were run a little aground, so that we were positively obliged to sell the best part of our furniture to make up some deficiencies, and we were once more in a bedless condition.

With the necessary utensils for the pastry-cook's shop, and the friendly assistance of some of our good friends, we took leave, and set out for a little place

called Pill, a sort of harbour for ships, five miles on this side of Bristol. The place itself is not unpleasant, if it were inhabited with any other kind of people than the savages who infest it, and are only, in outward form, distinguishable from beasts of prey. To be short, the villanies of these wretches are of so heinous and unlimited a nature, they render the place so unlike any other part of the habitable world, that I can compare it only to the anti-chamber of that abode we are admonished to avoid in the next life, by leading a good one here.

A boy there of eight or ten years of age is as well versed in the most beastly discourse, and the more dreadful sin of blasphemy and swearing, as any drunken reprobate of thirty; and he who drinks hardest, and excels most in these terrible qualifications, stands foremost in his father's favour.

There are some few that don't belong to the boats, that are reasonable creatures; and I am amazed they can patiently bear to reside where there is such a numerous set of cannibals. A name they very justly deserve, for I believe there are some among them who would not scruple to make a meal of their fellow-creatures.

I have seen many a suffering wretch who has been wind-bound, sent away half naked after they had spent their ready money, who have been obliged to strip themselves of their clothes, and glad to part from a thing worth twenty shillings to obtain with difficulty one to keep them from starving, and that without any view of ever seeing it again: nay, their want of principle and christianity is such, that if they out-stay the means of raising a sixpence for a bed, they will charitably turn them into the street to

“Rest their heads on what cold stone they please.”

For near six months my friend and I resided in this terrible abode of infamy and guilt; but being ignorant, at our first coming, of what kind of mortals they were, we settled amongst them, and did not find

it an easy matter to remove, though we went trembling to bed every night with dreadful apprehensions of some ill-treatment before the break of day.

I took a little shop, and because I was resolved to set off my matters as grand as possible, I had a board put over my door with this inscription—

BROWN, PASTRYCOOK, FROM LONDON:

At which place I can't charge myself with ever having, in the course of my life, attempted to spoil the ingredients necessary in the composition of a tart. But that did not signify, as long as I was a Londoner! to be sure, my pastry must be good!

While the ships continued coming in from Ireland, in the months of June, July, and August, I had a good running trade; but, alas! the winter was most terrible, and if an uncle of my friend's (who died while we were there) had not left her a legacy, we must inevitably have perished.

About the time the news came of her money, we were involved to the amount of about four or five and thirty shillings; and if a shilling would have saved us from total destruction we did not know where to raise it.

On the receipt of the letter, I showed it to the landlord, hoping he would lend me a guinea to bear my charges to Mrs Brown's aunt, who lives in Oxfordshire, where I was to go to receive her legacy, which was a genteel one, and I should have left her as a hostage till my return.

But the incredulous blockhead conceived the letter to be forged; and as he himself was capable of such a fraud, imagined we had artfully contrived to get a guinea out of him, and reward him by running away in his debt. But he was quite mistaken, as he was afterwards convinced, and made a thousand awkward excuses for his unkindness when we received the money and had discharged his trifling demands.

I consulted on my pillow what was best to be done,

and communicated my thoughts to my friend; upon which we concluded, without speaking a word to anybody, both to set out and fetch the money, according to order, from her relation, though there were two very great bars to such progress, in the eye of reason, but I stepped over both.

One was, having no more than a single groat in the world between us; and the other, my having been obliged to pledge my hat at Bristol a fortnight before for half-a-crown, to carry on the anatomical business we haplessly pursued.

Yet notwithstanding these terrible disasters, I was resolved at all events to go the journey. I took my fellow-sufferer with me, who was lost in wonder at so daring an enterprize, to set out without either hat or money fourscore miles on foot. But I soon eased the anxiety of mind she laboured under, by assuring her that when we got to Bristol, I would apply to a friend who would furnish me with a small matter to carry us on to Bath.

This pacified the poor soul, who could scarce see her way for tears before I told her my design, which never entered my imagination till we had got two miles beyond the detested place we lived in. Our circumstances were then so desperate, I thought

“Whatever world we next were thrown upon,
“Could not be worse than *Pill*.”

As we were on our march we were met by some of our unneighbourly neighbours, who took notice of my being in full career without a hat; and of Mrs Brown with a bundle in her hand, which contained only a change of linen for us on our travel.

They soon alarmed our landlord with the interview, with many conjectures of our being gone off; and concluded my being bareheaded was intended as a blind for our excursion; but let their thoughts be what they would, we were safe in Bristol by the time they got home to make their political report; and I

obtained at the first word the timely assistance our necessities required, to procure a supper and bed that night, besides what served to bear our charges to Bath next morning.

The only distress I had to overcome was, to procure a covering for my unthinking head; but providence kindly directed us to a house where there was a young journeyman, a sort of Jemmy Smart, who dressed entirely in taste, that lodged where we lay that night. As I appeared, barring the want of a hat, as smart as himself in dress, he entered into conversation with me; and finding him a good-natured man, ventured (as I was urged by downright necessity) to beg the favour of him to lend me a hat, which by being very dusty I was well assured had not been worn some time, from which I conceived he would not be in a violent hurry to have it restored; and, framing an excuse of having sent my own to be dressed, easily obtained the boon.

Next morning at the hour of five we set out, and stayed at Bath till the morning following; though I remember I was obliged to give the landlady my waistcoat for the payment of my lodging before we went to bed, which I had the comfort of redeeming by the help of Mr Kennedy and company, and set forwards on my journey with the favour they were pleased to bestow on me.

I never received an obligation in my life that I was ashamed to acknowledge, though I have very lately incurred the displeasure of a fine lady, for mentioning a person in my third number to whom I shall ever think myself most transcendently obliged; and shall never be persuaded to forget their humanity, or to reconcile contradictions, and believe in impossibilities.

As soon as I was empowered, by the help of a little cash, we set out from Bath to Oxfordshire, and in three days arrived at the happy spot, where we were furnished with that opiate for grief, the want of which had many tedious nights kept us waking.

Our journey home was expedited by taking a double horse from Whitney to Cirencester, and now and then, for the rest of the way, mounting up into a hay cart or a timely waggon.

When we returned to Bristol we met with several of the Pill gentry, who were surprised to see us, and informed us how terribly we had been exploded, as being cheats and runaways; and though they themselves, in our absence, were as inveterate as the rest of the vulgar crew, were the first to condemn others for a fault they were equally guilty of.

I returned the borrowed hat, and went home triumphant in my own; paid my landlord; and, as long as the money lasted, was the worthiest gentleman in the county; but when our stock was exhausted, and we were reduced to a second necessity of contracting a fresh score, I was as much disregarded as a dead cat, without the remembrance of a single virtue I was master of while I had a remaining guinea in my pocket.

Business daily decreasing from the want of shipping coming in, and the winter growing fast upon us, we had no prospect before us but of dying by inches with cold and hunger; and what aggravated my own distress, was having unfortunately drawn in my friend to be a melancholy partaker of my sufferings.

This reflection naturally roused me into an honourable spirit of resolution not to let her perish through my unhappy and mistaken conduct, which I meant all for the best, though it unfortunately proved otherwise; and that I might not stay at Pill till we were past the power of getting away, I sat down and wrote a little tale, which filled up the first and second columns of a newspaper, and got a friend to introduce me to Mr W——d, printer, on the T——y; who engaged me, at a small pittance per week, to write, and correct the press when business was in a hurry, which indeed it generally was, as he is a man of reputation and greatly respected.

I believe, if he had been perfectly assured who I was, and had known how much I had it in my power to have been useful to him, as well as myself, it had been much better for us both. However, it was kind in him to employ a distressed person, and a stranger, to whom he could not possibly be under the least obligation.

Having secured something to piddle on, for I can call it no better, I ran back to Pill to bless my friend with the glad tidings ; and as it was a long and dirty walk from thence to Bristol, and infinitely dangerous over Leigh down, which is full three miles in length, besides two miserable miles before that to trudge, we thought it better to give up what we had to the landlord, to whom we were but eighteen shillings indebted, though we left him as much as fairly stood us in five pounds ready money ; but if we had offered to have made a sale of it, I knew their consciences would have given us sixpence for that which might be worth a crown or ten shillings : so we even locked up the shop, and went with the key in my pocket to Bristol ; and in two days' time I sent it back with a note, to let him know what we had left was entirely his own, for that we should never more return.

In truth I have been as good as my word, and shall continue so ; for if business or inclination should ever excite me to take a trip to Ireland, I would go Chester way : and if travellers knew as much as I do of that horrid seat of cruelty and extortion, they would all come into the same determination.

Having thus comfortably withdrawn ourselves from this hated place, we took a lodging at two shillings per week ; and if I had not had the good fortune to be kindly accepted on by a few friends who were constantly inviting me, the remaining part of my wages would not have been sufficient to have afforded us, with other expenses, above two good meals in a week.

But thanks to my friends who empowered me to consign it all to the use of one, to whom I should

have thought, on this occasion, if every shilling had been a guinea, I had made but a reasonable acknowledgment, after having immersed her in difficulties which nothing but real friendship and a tender regard to my health (which through repeated grievances, was much impaired) could have made her blindly inconsistent with her own interest to give into, and so patiently endure.

This business lasted for one month exactly, and I found it impossible to subsist, without being troublesome to friends; and Mr W——d not caring to enlarge my income, I took it into my head to try for a benefit, and to that end printed some bills in the style of an advertisement, which were kindly presented to me by my master.

All was to be done under the rose, on account of the magistrates, who have not suffered any plays to be acted in the city for many years; but notwithstanding I slyly ventured to have ‘Barnwell’ exhibited in the very heart of it, at the Black Raven, in High street, where I had as many promises as would have filled the room (which was a large one) had it been twice as big: but, alas! they were but promises, for instead of five and twenty pounds I had barely four, and abominably involved by the bargain; insomuch, I was obliged to march quietly off and say nothing.

After I was gone, several pitied my misfortune, and declared if I would make a second attempt I should be made amends for the disappointment of the former; but I thought it mighty well as it was, and, as I was safe in a whole skin, would not run the chance of being a second time deceived, nor the hazard of being more deeply engaged than I was.

I was so miserably put to my shifts, that the morning after my *malefit*, I was obliged to strip my friend of the only decent gown she had, and pledged it to pay the horse-hire for the players who came from Wells to assist me; which, to do them justice, was a difficulty they were entirely ignorant of.

'Twas no small mortification to me not to have it in my power to reward them genteely for their trouble ; and more especially so, as my own daughter was one of the number, with her husband, whom she imprudently married, contrary to my inclination, about three years before.

Though I had no fortune to give her, without any partiality, I look on her as a more advantageous match for a discreet man than a woman who might bring one, and confound it in unnecessary expenses, which I am certain Kitty will never do ; and, had she met with as sober and reasonable a creature as herself, in the few years they have had a company, might have been worth a comfortable sum of money, to have set them up in some creditable business that might have redounded more to their quiet and reputation.

But I fear that is as impossible to hope or expect, as 'twould be likely to unmarry them ; which, had it been in my power, should have been done the first moment I heard of the displeasing knot's being tied : but as it is,

“ I here do give him that with all my heart
Which, but that he has already,
With all my heart I would keep from him.”

As my child was at Wells with her company, nature was more prevalent in that point than necessity to fix me there, for there was another set of people I could have gone to thirty miles off, a different road ; but, notwithstanding my dislike to her marriage, I wanted to be as near her as I could, and joined them at Wells, where I was very well acquainted ; and, as much as players can expect, well regarded by the best in the town.

About three years before, I had been there with Mr Elrington's company, and we met with uncommon success ; but the last time the small-pox raged violently there, and if the ladies and gentlemen had not been extremely kind, the poor exhibitors might have

been glad to have shared the fate of the invalids, to have been insured of a repository for their bones.

'Tis a common observation, that evils often produce good effects, and such my daughter found from the generosity of the ladies, who made her several valuable presents, which enlarged their wardrobe considerably; and being a well-behaved girl, that recommended her to their consideration, in respect of her private character; and her public performance on the stage rendered her very pleasing to the audience in general.

I humbly entreat to be believed, when, without partiality, I aver her genius would recommend her to a station in either theatre, if properly made use of, as she has an infinite share of humour, that calculates her for an excellent low comedian; though she is obliged, having none equal to herself, to appear in characters in which her chief merit consists in being positively a sensible speaker.

I once saw her play *Horatia*, in the 'Roman Father;' and was astonished to find her so truly affected with the scene, where she comes to upbraid *Publius* for the murder of her lover, and provoke her own death from her brother's hand. I confess I was pleasingly surprised, and beg pardon for degenerating so far as to speak in praise of so near a relation, who really deserved it; an error my family is not very apt to run into.

A second time she gave me equal delight in the part of *Boadicea*, which I should never have suspected from her uncultivated genius; but she proved she had one in very justly acquitting herself in that character; but yet I had rather see her in low comedy, as 'tis more agreeable to her figure, and entirely so to the oddity of her humorous disposition; and I wish she was so settled as to constantly play in that walk, which is a very pleasing one, and most useful when players come towards the decline of life: for when they have outlived the bloom and beauty of a lady

Townly or a Monimia, they may make very pleasing figures in a Mrs Day or a widow Lackit.

I wish the girl may take this friendly hint now she is young, as I am certain, in respect to her years, she may in all probability live long enough to make a considerable figure in characters of that cast.

I stayed with her the run of six towns, the last but one of which was Honiton in Devonshire, where I had the happiness of gaining many friends of distinction; and perhaps should have continued longer, but that I received a letter from my brother, to inform me Mr Simpson of Bath had a mind to engage me to prompt, and undertake the care of the stage incidental to that office.

As I was heartily tired of strolling, and being too frequently impertinently treated by my daughter's husband, I readily embraced the offer, and set out for Bath with my friend (who had been as often, and equally insulted by the little insignificant); and on my arrival, Mr Simpson, in a gentleman-like manner received me, and lent me a sum of money to equip me in my proper character, which I repaid him weekly out of my salary, and thank him most sincerely for the favour.

From the month of September to March I continued there, but the fatigue of the place was more than my health or spirits could easily support; for I am certain the prompters of either theatres in London have not half the plague in six months that I have had in as many days.

'Tis true, Mr Simpson was owner, and ought to have been master of the house, but his goodnature and unwillingness to offend the most trifling performer made him give up his right of authority, and rather stand neuter when he ought to have exerted it.

The hurry of business in his rooms, which were more methodically conducted than his theatre, took up so much of his time, 'twas impossible for him to

pay a proper attention to both. By this means, what ought to have been a regular government was reduced to anarchy and uproar. Each had their several wills ; and but one, which was myself, bound to obey them all.

This any reasonable person will allow to be a hard and difficult task, as I was not inclined to offend any of them ; and though they herded in parties, I was resolved to be a stranger to their disputes, till open quarrels obliged me to become acquainted with them ; and in such cases I was often made use on as a porter to set these matters to rights.

This I confess my spirit could not easily brook, both in respect to my father, as well as having been on a much better footing, on a superior theatre than any I was obliged to pay a daily attendance on.

I can be upon my oath, during the whole time of my residence in Bath, I had not, even on Sundays, a day I could call my own : and Mr Bodely the printer can testify, I have often left fresh orders while he has been at church, either for alteration of parts, or of capital distinctions in the bills, without which very indifferent actors would not otherwise go on.

I think 'twould have been a greater proof of judgment to have distinguished themselves on the stage than upon a post or brick wall ; and I have often thought, when I wrote the word ' performed,' it would have been no error to have changed it to ' deformed,' of which I have often had melancholy proofs from a brace of heroes, who, I believe (one in particular) thought none equal to them. And truly I can't but be of their minds, for two such great men were never seen before, and it is hoped never will again.

As to the women, the principal, which is Miss Ibbott, is really deserving of praise and admiration, as all she does is from the result of a very great and uncommon genius. I own myself not very apt to be partial, but this gentlewoman struck me into a most pleasing astonishment by her performance of many

characters ; but most particularly in the part of Isabella, in 'The Fatal Marriage.' She not only drew the audience into a most profound attention, but absolutely into a general flood of commiserating tears ; and blended nature and art so exquisitely well, that 'twas impossible not to feel her sorrows, and bear the tenderest part in her affliction.

I must confess I never was more truly affected with a tragical performance, and was rendered incapable of reading a single syllable ; but luckily for Miss Ibbott, she is always so perfect, a prompter is a useless person while she is speaking : and it is no compliment to insert what I told her when she came off ; that

———" Her whole function suited
With forms to her conceit."

I am very certain there were several people of quality down at Bath who can testify the truth of what I have said of her ; and I should think it very well worth the while of the masters of either of the theatres to take her merit into consideration ; and if she had the advantage of seeing Mrs Cibber, Mrs Woffington, or Mrs Pritchard, in their different lights, it would make her as complete an actress as ever trod the English stage.

The merit of this person was not a little conducive to the interest of the players in general, which was demonstrated in the deficiency of the night's receipts whenever it happened that she was out of a play, which indeed was very seldom : but as merit generally creates envy, her contemporaries would scarce allow it her, either publicly or privately, notwithstanding the politest audiences testified it by a universal applause, and they themselves proved it by the odds of their revenues, when first characters have been stuffed up by those who would have made better figures as her attendants while she had performed them.

The business in general was, according to all accounts, that season better than they had known it for many past, and was greatly heightened by the universal admiration of the performance of the justly-celebrated Mr Maddox, who engaged with Mr Simpson at a considerable salary, though not more than he truly deserved.

I believe the comedians found him worthy of his income, as he not only brought in what paid his agreement, but more than doubled that sum, which they shared among them; yet to my certain knowledge there was private murmuring, even in respect to him, though they profited by his success, and in spite of their grudging hearts could not help being delighted at his surprising feats of activity on the wire, which he is at Whitsuntide engaged to perform at Mr Hallam's Wells in Goodman's fields, and intends to entertain the town with several new things, which he has never as yet publicly exhibited. I hope, not only in respect to Mr Maddox, but in regard to Mr Hallam, who is an honest worthy man, he will be constantly visited by all people of true taste.

Soon after Mr Maddox left Bath (as Mr Fribble says) a most terrible fracas happened to the states-general of both the theatres, occasioned by a mercenary view of gain in an old scoundrel, who was chiefly supported by charitable donations, in which Mr Simpson (whose humanity frequently prompts him to such acts) had been often very liberal to this viper, who rewarded him by lodging an information against his, and the company in Orchard street.

This put a stop to the business for about three weeks, and was brought to a public process; but I believe an attempt of the kind will never be made again.

As Bath is the seat of pleasure for the healthful, and a grand restorative for the sick, 'tis looked on as a privileged place; and those who come only to please themselves expect a free indulgence in that

point, as much as the infirm do the use of the baths for their infirmities; therefore a suppression of any part of their innocent diversions was deemed by the people of quality as the highest affront that could be offered them, especially as they, and others of distinction, are the absolute supports of the place, which, without them, would be but a melancholy residence for the inhabitants, if custom had not made it fashionably popular, being a town of no particular trade.

This reflection ought to put the strongest guard upon them, not to be guilty of offences themselves, or countenance it in others, which was positively the case in relation to this affair, as it was proved a certain a—— raised a contribution of twenty guineas to bribe the old knave to put this cruel design in force against the players.

This greatly exasperated every person of condition, who, as it was an infringement upon their liberty of entertainment, interested themselves greatly in behalf of each theatre, and carried their point against the insolent invader of their privileges.

During the suspension, I could scarce walk through the grove but the very chairmen had something to say, by way of exultation, on the misfortunes of the poor show-folk, as they impudently and ignorantly termed them, not considering that play-nights very greatly enlarged their incomes.

Among this set of two-legged horses were scattered some of the new fangled methodical tribe, who blessed their stars that there was an end put to profanation and riot.

'Tis surprising that the minds of those who wear the human form can be so monstrously infatuated, to be the constant attendants on the canting drones, whose talents consist only in making a shoe or a pair of breeches. Have we not thousands of fine gentlemen, regularly bred at universities, who understand the true system of religion? And are not the churches hourly open to all who please to go to them, instead

of creeping into holes and corners, to hear much less than the generality of the auditors are able to inform their hypocritical pastors?

I very lately visited Mr Yates's New Wells, and was persecuted for an hour with words without meaning, and sound without sense. I own I should as soon think of dancing a hornpipe in a cathedral, as having the least tincture of devotion, where I had myself been honoured as a heathen deity, and dreaded as a roaring devil.

No mortal but Mr Yates could have thought of letting the place for that use; and, I believe, the first symptoms of his religion will be discovered, if there ever should be a suppression of this mockery of godliness, in the loss of his sanctified tenants, and the sad chance of the tenement standing empty.

He must pardon me for this liberty; but as we are both equally odd, in separate lights, neither of us can ever be surprised or offended at what the other says or does.

My warmth, I fear, has led me into an unnecessary digression from my story; but, I confess, I think the following these people so inconsistent with the rules of reason and sense, I have not patience to think that any creature, who is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, should listen to such rhapsodies of nonsense, which rather confound than serve to improve their understandings; and consequently can be no way instrumental to the salvation of their souls.

If public devotion four times a day is not sufficient for that torrent of goodness they would be thought to have, their private prayers at home, offered with sincerity and penitence, they may be assured will be graciously received, and prevent that loss of time bestowed in hearing the gospel turned topsy-turvy by those who really are as ignorant of it as the rostrum they stand in, and whose heads seem to be branches of the same root.

Notwithstanding the gaiety of Bath, they swarm

like wasps in June, and have left their stings in the minds of many. I am certain, rancour and malice are particularly predominant in them, which they discovered in an eminent degree when the houses were shut up, by saying and doing all they could to have them remain so, to the destruction of many families, who were happy in a comfortable subsistence arising from them.

I know 'twas some guineas out of my pocket, and though I grew heartily tired of my office, I intended to have finished the season, if this disaster had not happened; but the uncertainty of their opening again fixed in me a resolution to leave them, which was strengthened by some ill-natured rebuffs I had met with from the lower part of the company, which I scarce thought worth my notice, having secretly determined to withdraw myself from that, and the fatigue being, I think, more proper to be undertaken by a man than a woman.

One thing I took monstrously ill, which I cannot help mentioning: some persons of fashion, who had seen me in London, had a mind that I should appear in the part of lord Foppington, in 'The Careless Husband;' and, at their request, I rehearsed it in a visit, which they were so obliging to tell me made them more anxious for my playing it. As a proof that they desired it, they communicated their design to him who ought to have been their commander-in-chief, and he agreed to their proposal, till two of his subalterns, neither of which were qualified to appear in the character, opposed it; each hoping to supply it themselves, without the advantage either of that ease in their action necessary to the part, or being able to utter a syllable of French. But what provoked me farther, was trumping up a story of my brother's having laid an injunction on Mr Simpson, never to permit me to go on the stage, but particularly in that character.

I believe the town has had too many proofs of my

brother's merit, to suppose it possible for me to be vain enough to conceive I should eclipse it by my performance, or that he was weak enough to fear it: and though I may be judged to have raised my thoughts to the highest pitch of vanity, in believing that to be the real case of my two opponents in this cause, I am positively assured it was the main motive of their being so industriously employed in preventing my coming on the stage.

To say truth, I began to be very angry with myself for ever condescending to sit behind the scenes to attend a set of people, that, I was certain, whatever faults I might have in acting, not one of them, Miss Ibbott excepted, was capable of discerning.

The intention of my playing was framed by my friends, to give me an opportunity of recommending myself to a benefit, who faithfully promised to exert their interest for me; but their scheme was soon frustrated, through the mean and dirty artifices of these two people, who, I am certain, ought to endeavour at making every one their friends, of which I have some modest reasons to believe they frequently stand in need of.

Mr Falkener very kindly offered to enter into the immediate study of lord Morelove, that the play might not wait for him, and was pleased at a seeming opportunity of my being more agreeably engaged than I was. But his goodnature is no wonder, for I must do him the justice to say I never heard him utter, or do a thing, that was inconsistent with the true character of a gentleman.

This ill-natured disappointment raised such indignation and contempt in me, that I as much abhorred to go to the house as some people do to undergo a course of nauseous physic; but I soon removed myself, and, if they will forgive my ever having been there at all, I will promise them never to do so again.

Before I conclude the account of my Bath expedition, I cannot avoid taking notice of a malicious

aspersion, thrown and fixed on me as a reason for leaving it, which was, that I designed to forsake my sex again, and that I positively was seen in the streets in breeches.

This I solemnly avow to be an impertinent falsehood, which was brought to London and spread itself, much to my disadvantage, in my own family, where I was informed it was delivered to them as a reality, by an actress that came to town soon after I quitted Bath. I guess at the person, but, as I know her to be half mad, must neither wonder or be angry at her folly; yet, as she has sometimes reason sufficient to distinguish between truth and falsehood, am surprised she should meanly have recourse to the latter, to make me appear ridiculous, who never gave her the least provocation to do me so apparent an injury. My only reason for not staying, was an absolute abhorrence to the office I was in, and which I would not again undertake for ten guineas per week.

It happened at the time I left Bath, there was, without exception, the most deplorable set of non-performers at Bradford that ever wrecked the heart of tragedy, or committed violence on the ears of the groundlings. I cannot say, with Shakspeare, 'They were perriwig-pated fellows,' for there was not a wig and a half throughout the whole company; and, I believe, there were not above two men that could boast of more than an equal quantity of shirts.

Business, they had none—money, so long a stranger to them, that they were in poor Sharp's condition, and had almost forgot the current coin of their own country. With these 'pleasing prospects of despair' I joined their community; and, as my mind was unloaded from the uneasiness I suffered from a fund of impertinent behaviour and everlasting fatigue, greatly prejudicial to my health, I sat quietly down, resolving not to repine at the worst that could happen for the short time I intended to stay with them.

A young man at Bath had a mind to indulge him-

self with a mouthful of tragedy ; but, that he might have a bellyful at once, gormandised the part of Othello, which brought us a good house, and was a very seasonable help, for we ate. Our landladies smiled, and we could call about us without the usual tremor that had attended our spirits for a fortnight before, with the terrible apprehensions of being answered with a negative, or served with reproachful doubts of their being ever paid.

A very few days entirely broke up this disjointed company, and we herded in parties. My friend and I went with another manager, almost as rich and wise as him we left ; when, after having starved for two or three towns, we received a very gross affront, on which I went to Devizes, where the above-mentioned notable gentleman, with his wife and a young fellow, besides our two selves, made up the whole totte.

They concluded we should play there ; but rather than suffer an insolence from such mortals, even in the greatest severity of fortune, I rather chose to put myself to the utmost inconveniencies I could possibly suffer. As a proof whereof, not having a farthing in the world, I sold a few trifling things for four shillings ; and, with that scanty sum, set out from Devizes, in Wiltshire, to Rumsey, in Hampshire, which, over Salisbury-Plain, is full forty miles : but as there are no houses over that long, solitary walk, allowed to receive travellers, we went under the plain, through all the villages, which lengthened our journey full twenty more.

Our night's expenses for lodging and supper came to nine-pence, so we positively had no more than three shillings and three-pence to support us for sixty miles.

My friend, as she had great cause, began, though in a tender manner, to reproach me for having left Bath ; and more especially as Miss Ibbot, Mr Falkener, Mr Giffard, and many more, who came to see the comical humours of the Moor of Venice, at Bradford,

used many forcible arguments to make me return; which I should have done, but that I happened to take offence at something said to me on that head by a particular person, who notwithstanding, I believe, meant well; but being perhaps in a peevish mood, as all the world at different times are, more or less, I persisted in my resolution of not going back; and hope it will be no affront to the theatrical community at Bath, to assure them from my heart, I never once repented it, but rather pitied my successor for being encumbered with a very fatiguing and unthankful office.

When I set out from Devizes I stood debating near an hour on the road, whether we should march for London or Hampshire, as our finances were equally capable of serving us to either place; but nature asserted her right of empire in my heart, and pointed me the road to pay my child a second visit; and after a most deplorable, half-starving journey, through intricate roads and terrible showers of rain, in three days' time, we arrived at Rumsey, having parted from our last three half-pence to ride five miles in a waggon, to the great relief of our o'er-tired legs.

It may be scarce believed that two persons should travel so far upon so small a pittance, who had not been from their birth inured to hardships; but we positively did, and, in the extreme heat of the day, were often glad to have recourse to a clear stream to quench our thirst, after a tedious, painful march; not only to save our money, but enable us to go through the toil of the day, till the friendly inn received us, where our over-wearied spirits were lulled by sleep into a forgetfulness of care.

I was questioned not long since, whether it was possible for me to have run through the strange vicissitudes of fortune I have given an account of, which I solemnly declare I am ready to make oath of the truth of every circumstance; and if any particular person or persons require it, will refer them to hun-

dreds now living, who have been witnesses of every article contained in my history : nor would I presume to impose a falsehood, where, as I was desired to give a real account, truth was so absolutely necessary ; and I believe the reader will find I have paid so strict a regard to it, that I have rather painted my own ridiculous follies in their most glaring lights, than debarred the reader the pleasure of laughing at me, or proudly concealed the utmost exigencies of my fate : both which may convince the world that I have been faithful in my declaration either way ; for none, I believe, desire through frolic alone to make sport for others, or excite a pity they never stood in need of.

My stay with my daughter was but short, as I had made a considerable progress in Mr Dumont's history ; which, as I had determined not to lead that uncomfortable kind of life any longer, I thought I could easily finish during the weekly publication ; and frequently declared my intention to my daughter and her husband when I was at Newport in the Isle of Wight, with a positive assurance that I would not go any farther with them.

This they either did not, or were not willing to believe, notwithstanding my frequent repetition of it ; and though I promised to make them happy with what might revert to me through my little labours, they injudiciously conceived I was doing them an injury, when, as I shall answer to heaven, I intended it to turn equally to their account as to my own : but a want of understanding and good mind on the one part, and a too implicit regard and obedience on the other, led them both into an error they had better have avoided.

I would not have the world believe, notwithstanding my aversion to the choice my foolish girl has made, that I would not in all reasonable respects have every action of her life correspondent with the necessary duty of a wife, which I am certain never can or should exempt her from that she owes me ; who

must, while we both exist, be undoubtedly her mother.

To be short, we parted ; and, till I could turn myself about, I went with another of their company (who left them through fears of the small-pox) to Lymington, where my daughter enslaved herself for life : from thence to Fareham, where, under a pretence of bringing over some hands to help us out, we being but six in number, my daughter's spouse came only with a cruel design to take away two of our hands, in pure spite to me ; but, against this horrid inclination or knowledge, he did me the greatest piece of service in the world, for I made a firm resolution never more to set my foot on a country stage.

Since the pitiful villany of strollers could reach one so nearly as one's own blood, I thought it then high time indeed to disclaim them : though I am well assured the girl would not have been guilty of the crime of depriving her mother of the morsel of bread she struggled for, had she not been enforced to it by a blind obedience to an inconsiderable fool.

I was monstrously ashamed to see an innocent man, who was the manager where I was then engaged, led into difficulties arising from an impudent revenge on me I did not deserve, which the young gentleman was too sensible of, and was not more concerned on his own than my account.

I prevailed on him to steer his course to London ; from whence, if his affairs could have been properly adjusted, I absolutely intended to have returned for a short time into the country with him, from a point of gratitude and honour, to make him in part amends for the injuries he had sustained from my son-in-law ; and I shall think he has an everlasting claim on that score, to any act of friendship within my power, whenever he thinks it consistent with his interest to require it.

This good-natured injured person had not only himself, but a wife and child, exclusive of my unfortu-

nate phiz to provide for, without the least prospect of doing it; but as I urged him so strenuously to go to London, I was determined to contrive the means, and applied to a friend of his, who very generously complied with the request I made in his behalf, and away we went to Portsmouth, hoping to have been time enough for the waggon which set out that day.

We were unluckily too late, which obliged us to retard our journey two days, and remained at Portsmouth on expenses. This was a terrible disaster, as our finances were at best but slender: but had they been much worse, I was resolved to see London, by heaven's permission, if I had been obliged to have been passed to it, being worn out with the general plagues of disappointment and ill usage, that are the certain consequentials of a strolling life.

When I set my foot upon London streets, though with only a single penny in my pocket, I was more transported with joy, than for all the height of happiness I had in former, and at different times possessed.

I hope those who read the description I have given of the inquietudes that all must expect to meet with who come under the impertinent power of travelling managers, will make a proper use of it by never forsaking a good trade or calling, of what kind soever to idle away their lives so unprofitably to themselves, and too often disadvantageously to the inhabitants of many an unsuccessful town.

I won't pretend to say that all heads of companies are without a rule of exception; but I must confess, those I have had to deal with, and that very lately too, are what I have before described: and I doubt not but there are numbers of my former fellow-sufferers who are of my opinion.

Thank heaven, I have not, nor ever intend to have, any farther commerce with them, but will apply myself closely to my pen; and, if I can obtain the honour and favour of my friends' company, at an annual benefit, I will, to the extent of my power, en-

deavour to entertain them with my own performance, and provide the best I can to fill up the rest of the characters.

I shall very shortly open my oratorical academy, for the instruction of those who have any hopes, from genius and figure, of appearing on either of the London stages, or York, Norwich, and Bath, all which are reputable, but will never advise or encourage any persons to make themselves voluntary vagabonds, for such, not only the laws, but the opinion of every reasonable person, deems those itinerant gentry, who are daily guilty of the massacre of dramatic poetry. But of them, no more! but a lasting and long farewell!

When I first came to town I had no design of giving any account of my life, farther than a trifling sketch, introduced in the preface to Mr Durnont's history, the first number of which will shortly make its appearance, and I hope will be kindly received by my worthy friends, who have favoured me in this work, which I should never have undertaken, had I not been positively and strongly urged to it, not conceiving that any action of my life could claim that attention I find it has, by the large demand I have had for my weekly numbers throughout England and Wales, for which I humbly offer my sincerest thanks, and shall ever own myself not only indebted, but highly honoured.

As I propose my pen to be partly my support, I shall always endeavour to render it an amusement to my readers, as far as my capacity extends; and as the world is sensible I have no view of fortune, but what I must, by heaven's assistance, strike out of myself, I hope I shall find a continuance of the favour I at present am blessed with, and shall think it my duty most carefully to preserve, not only in regard to my own interest, but from a grateful respect to those who kindly confer it.

I entreat the readers to excuse some faults, which

were slips of the press, occasioned through a hurry of business, that rendered it impossible to give time for a proper inspection, either by me or the printer, who has been greatly hurried on account of the benefits at both the theatres, which he is indispensably obliged to pay regard to in point of time.

'Tis generally the rule to put the summary of books of this kind at the beginning, but as I have, through the whole course of my life, acted in contradiction to all points of regularity, beg to be indulged in a whimsical conclusion of my narrative, by introducing that last, which I will allow should have been first. As for example :

This day, April 19, 1755, is published, the eighth and last number of a Narrative of the Life of Mrs Charlotte Charke, with a dedication from and to myself : the properest patroness I could have chosen, as I am most likely to be tenderly partial to my poetical errors, and will be as bounteous in the reward, as we may reasonably imagine my merit may claim.

This work contains, first,—A notable promise of entertaining the town with the history of Henry Dumont, esq. and Miss Charlotte Evelyn ; but, being universally known to be an odd product of nature, was requested to postpone that, and give an account of myself, from my infancy to the present time.

Secondly,—My natural propensity to a hat and wig, in which, at the age of four years, I made a very considerable figure in a ditch, with several other succeeding mad pranks. An account of my education at Westminster. Why did not I make a better use of so happy an advantage !

Thirdly,—My extraordinary skill in the science of physic, with a recommendation of the necessary use of snails and gooseberry leaves, when drugs and chemical preparations were not comeatable. My natural aversion to a needle, and profound respect for a currycomb, in the use of which I excelled most young ladies in Great Britain. My extensive know-

ledge in gardening ; not forgetting that necessary accomplishment for a young gentlewoman, in judiciously discharging a blunderbuss or a fowling-piece. My own, and the lucky escape of life, when I ran over a child at Uxbridge.

Fourthly,—My indiscreetly plunging into the sea of matrimony, and becoming a wife before I had the proper understanding of a reasonable child. An account of my coming on the stage. My uncommon success there. My folly in leaving it. My recommendation of my sister Marples to the consideration of every person who chooses to eat an elegant meal, or chat away a few moments with a humorous, good-natured, elderly landlady. My turning grocer, with some wise remarks on the rise and fall of sugars and teas. An unfortunate adventure in selling a link. A short account of my father and mother's courtship and marriage.

Fifthly,—A faithful promise to prefer a bill in chancery against my uncle's widow, who has artfully deprived his heirs at law of a very considerable fortune.—N.B. The old dame may be assured I will be as good as my word.—My keeping a grand puppet-shew, and losing as much money by it as it cost me. My becoming a widow, and being afterwards privately married ; which, as it proved, I had better have let alone. My going into men's clothes, in which I continued many years ; the reason of which I beg to be excused, as it concerns no mortal now living but myself. My becoming a second time a widow, which drew on me inexpressible sorrows, that lasted upwards of twelve years, and the unforeseen turns of providence, by which I was constantly extricated from them. An unfortunate interview with a fair lady, who would have made me master of herself and fortune, if I had been lucky enough to have been in reality what I appeared.

Sixthly,—My endeavouring at a reconciliation with my father. His sending back my letter in a blank.

His being too much governed by humour, but more so by her, whom age cannot exempt from being the lively limner of her own face ; which she had better neglect a little, and pay part of that regard to what she ought to esteem the nobler part, and must have an existence when her painted frame is reduced to ashes.

Seventhly,—My being gentleman to a certain peer ; after my dismissal, becoming only an occasional player, while I was playing at bo-peep with the world. My turning pork merchant ; broke, through the inhuman appetite of a hungry dog. Went a strolling. Several adventures during my peregrination. My return, and setting up an eating house in Drury lane ; undone again, by pilfering lodgers. Turning drawer at St Marylabonne. An account of my situation there. Going to the Haymarket theatre with my brother. His leaving it. Many distresses arising on that account. Going a strolling a second time, and staying near nine years. Several remarkable occurrences while I was abroad ; particularly my being sent to G—— gaol, for being an actor ; which, to do most strolling players justice, they ought not to have the laws enforced against them on that score, for a very substantial reason. My settling in Wales, and turning pastrycook and farmer. Made a small mistake in turning hog merchant. Went to the seat of destruction called Pill : broke, and came away. Hired myself to a printer at Bristol, to write, and correct the press. Made a short stay there. Vagabondized again, and last Christmas returned to London, where I hope to remain as long as I live.

I have now concluded my Narrative, from my infancy to the time of my returning to London ; and if those who do me the honour to kill time by the perusal, will seriously reflect on the manifold distresses I have suffered, they must think me wonderfully favoured by providence, in the surprising turns

of fortune, which have often redeemed me from the devouring jaws of total destruction, when I have least expected it.

I wish the merciful example of the great Creator, who never yet forsook me, had prevailed on the mind of him who, by divine ordination, was the author of my being; and am sorry that he should so o'ershoot his reason as not to consider, when I only asked for blessing and pardon, he should deny that which from a superior power he will one day find necessary himself to implore; and I hope his prayer will be answered, and that heaven will not be deaf to him, as he has been to me.

I cannot recollect any crime I have been guilty of that is unpardonable, which the denial of my request may possibly make the world believe I have; but I dare challenge the most malicious tongue of slander to a proof of that kind, as heaven and my own conscience can equally acquit me of having deserved that dreadful sentence, of not being forgiven.

The errors of my youth chiefly consisted in a thoughtless wildness, partly owing to having too much will of my own in infancy; which I allow was occasioned by an over-fondness where I now unhappily find a fixed aversion: but notwithstanding that unkindness, nature will assert her right, and tenderly plead in behalf of him, who I am certain, through age and infirmity, rather than a real delight in cruelty, has listened too much to an invidious tongue, which had been more gracefully employed in healing, not widening a breach between a father and a child who wanted only the satisfaction of knowing her name was no longer hateful to him; who, in spite of fortune's utmost rigour, I must think myself bound by all laws, both divine and human, still to cherish in my heart and tenderly revere.

As I have nothing farther to entertain my friends with, as to my life, I shall with the humblest submission take my leave of them; and as I design to

pass in the catalogue of authors, will endeavour to produce something now and then to make them laugh, if possible ; for I think 'tis pity to draw tears from those who have so generously contributed towards making me smile.

SEQUEL


TO THE

NARRATIVE OF MRS CHARKE.

THE foregoing very singular memoirs were first published in 1755, and at about the same time Mrs Charke had completed the novel to which she alludes more than once in her Narrative. The wretched condition to which she was then reduced cannot be better related than in the language of Mr Samuel Whyte,* who accompanied his friend, a bookseller, to the abode of Mrs Charke, to hear the novel read. “ Her habitation,” says the description of Mr Whyte, “ was a wretched thatched hovel, situate on the way to Islington, not very distant from the New River Head, where it was usual at that time for the scavengers to deposit the sweepings of the streets. The night preceding, a heavy rain had fallen, which rendered this extraordinary seat of the muses nearly inaccessible; and we could only approach by wading almost knee-deep in mud. We did not attempt to pull the latch-string, but knocked at the door, which was opened by a tall, meagre, ragged figure, with a blue apron, indicating, what otherwise was doubtful, that it was a female before

* In a communication to the Monthly Magazine

us; a perfect model for the Copper Captain's tattered landlady, that deplorable exhibition of the fair sex in the comedy of 'Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.' With a torpid voice and constrained smile, she desired us to walk in. The first object that presented itself was a dresser—clean, it must be confessed, but wretchedly furnished; to the right sat the mistress of the house, on a broken chair under the mantle-piece, by a fire merely sufficient to put us in mind of starving. At our author's feet, on the flounce of her dingy petticoat, reclined a dog, almost a skeleton, who saluted us with a snarl. 'Have done, Fidele! these are friends.' The tone of her voice had something in it humbled and disconsolate, a mingled effort of authority and pleasure. Poor soul! few were her visitors of that description; no wonder the creature barked. A magpie was perched on the top rail of her chair, and on her lap was placed a pair of mutilated bellows—the pipe was gone. These were used as a succedaneum for a writing-desk, on which lay displayed her hopes and treasure, the manuscript of her novel. A rough deal-board, with three hobbling supporters, was brought for our convenience; on which, without farther ceremony, we contrived to sit down, and enter into business. The work was read, remarks made, alterations suggested and agreed to, and thirty guineas demanded for the copy. The squalid handmaid, who had been an attentive listener, stretched forth her tawny neck with an eye of anxious expectation. The bookseller offered five guineas. Our authoress did not appear hurt; disappointment had rendered her



mind callous: however, some altercation ensued, and was terminated by the bookseller doubling his first proposal, which was accepted."

Mrs Charke survived the above picturesque interview about four years, her death taking place in 1759. There is, however, no subsequent account of her; but there is reason to believe that she never applied for parish assistance, depending on her pen, and the occasional bounty of the compassionate, until her decease. The fate of this victim to an innate taste for eccentricity and vagabondism may excite surprise, but scarcely sympathy. Born in affluence, educated with care and tenderness, and possessed of at least respectable talents, the misfortunes of this extraordinary woman were altogether of her own creating—at least in the language of common life; a philosopher might possibly discover or presume causes which would entitle her to as much pity as many martyrs to passions of a far higher description.

THE END.

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